

MANFRED



*An Edition
of Byron's
Manuscripts
and a
Collection
of Essays*

Peter Cochran



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By

Peter Cochran

Cambridge
Scholars
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ABBREVIATIONS

To economize on space in the notes, the following abbreviations are used for the books referred to. See the Bibliography for further information.

- BJ: *The Byron Journal*
BLJ: *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand (13 vols, John Murray, 1973-94)

When a citation from BLJ is headed "Text from", followed by a manuscript reference, it means that the text is not from BLJ but from the original manuscript. Codes are as follows: <Byron's erasures>; {Byron's interlineated corrections and second thoughts}; [editorial additions].

- Coleridge: *The Works of Lord Byron: A New, Revised and Enlarged Edition with illustrations. Poetry*, ed. E.H.Coleridge (7 vols, John Murray, 1898-1904)
Chew: Chew, Samuel Claggett. *The Dramas of Lord Byron*. (Göttingen 1915, rpt. Russell and Russell, 1964)
CHP: Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*
CMP: *Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991)
CPW: *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann and Barry Weller, 7 vols (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980-93)
DJ: Byron, *Don Juan*
Green / Lapinski: Matthew J.A. Green and Piya Pal-Lapinski (eds.) *Byron and the Politics of Freedom and Terror* (Palgrave Macmillan 2011)
Howell: Howell, Margaret J. *Byron Tonight* (Springwood, 1982)
HVSV: *His Very Self and Voice*, ed. Ernest J. Lovell jr., (1954)
JMS: *Journals of Mary Shelley* ed. Paula R. Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987)
Jones: Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964)
LBLI: Teresa Guiccioli, *Lord Byron's Life in Italy*, tr. Rees ed. Cochran (Delaware, 2005)

- LJ: *The Works of Lord Byron, Letters and Journals*, ed. R.E.Prothero (John Murray, 1898-1904)
- LJM: *The Letters of John Murray to Lord Byron*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Liverpool University Press, 2007)
- Medwin: *Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. Lovell, (Princeton 1966)
- MSYR: *Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics Byron* vol I (Garland 1986)
- RR: *The Romantics Reviewed* (ed. Reiman, Garland 1972)
- SAHC: Fischer, Doucet Devin and Reiman, Donald, eds., *Shelley and his Circle* (Harvard 1961 2002)
- Taborski: Boleslav Taborski, *Byron and the Theatre* (Salzburg 1972)

INTRODUCTION:

MANFRED AND DRURY LANE

The writing of *Manfred*

There are two principal manuscripts of *Manfred*. The rough draft is in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York;¹ and the printer's fair copy is in the John Murray Archive (now at the National Library of Scotland).² However, according to Jerome McGann,³ the first part of the work to be written was Ashtarothe's song (original III i 82-5), which is on paper acquired before Byron went east in 1809, but probably written-on after he returned. It's on an extra sheet in the Morgan manuscript.⁴ The Incantation at the end of I i (192-261) was also composed in advance of the bulk of the play, was fair-copied by Claire Claremont, and published in 1816 in *The Prisoner of Chillon and Other Poems*, published on either November 23rd or December 5th 1816. The two most important manuscripts are not dated.

All these manuscripts are described in detail below.

The role of Douglas Kinnaird: *Manfred* as an intended theatre event

Manfred is a most un-Promethean figure: rather he's conceived as an anti-Promethean figure. Prometheus feels benignly towards mankind: Manfred feels contempt for mankind, thinking himself of a different order – that is, feeling himself (arrogantly and incorrectly) to be what Prometheus really is. Prometheus steals (among other things) fire from heaven, and gives it to mankind at no small cost to himself; Manfred has discovered the secret of the universe (a dualistic concept cobbled together by Byron from the notes to Thomas Taylor's translation of Pausanias), but he doesn't give it to mankind – he does nothing with it at all. He doesn't tell it to anyone

1: It is in MSYR I pp.23-144.

2: NLS Ms.43335.

3: CPW IV p.464.

4: MSYR I pp.131-2.

(except the Witch of the Alps); he doesn't write a book about it; he dies with it still a secret. The self-punishments he put himself through in order to discover it are wasted, and may (this is left vague) have occasioned the death of Astarte, she whom he loved most.

So far from being a Promethean Hero, *Manfred* seems like a man affected very badly with the Death-Wish. He experiences no exterior sources of oppression at all. He has no social superiors; he refuses to kneel to Arimanes; he defies both the Abbot and the Spirit who comes for him in the last scene – if anything, *he* oppresses *them*. As Southey wrote, Byron “met the Devil on the Jungfrau – and bullied him”.⁵ The only being of whom *Manfred* is in awe is Astarte. His play cannot be made political. He may fight against paternal authority figures (perhaps in part by being “transgressive” with Astarte); but they all retreat before him, and none of them are political authorities anyway.

There are no politics in *Manfred*. Byron's own political posturing led nowhere. His anticlimactic “plunge” into Italian politics led nowhere; and when he “plunged” into “Greek politics”, he did so fully aware that western-style “politics” didn't exist in Greece – he went into Greece with a death-wish fully comparable to that displayed by *Manfred* himself. Both “plunges” were compensations for the fact that he thought, if he took part in English politics, that he would endanger his holdings in the government funds; and so he let his friends get political there.

I'd like to forward a blasphemous counter-thesis to the idea that *Manfred* is a political play:⁶ that it's not a thesis about freedom or terror: it's a play designed for Edmund Kean to act in at Drury Lane, written by Byron to a commission from Douglas Kinnaird, with a view to getting Byron's revenge on the England who – he asserted – had expelled him. Byron mentions none of this; but he rarely wrote with one-hundred-percent frankness, and sometimes wrote with no frankness at all.

The Chamois Hunter's glancing reference to William Tell (II i 40) reminds us what a real Swiss political hero is. Tell had a son, after all – no Byronic Hero ever breeds.

On July 9th 1816, Kinnaird (still on the Drury Lane Committee), wrote to Byron:

There is one other subject I implore you to satisfy me upon – when shall I receive a Tragedy from you – Never was there a moment when you could try it on the stage with such a certainty of the author being unknown – you

5: *Some Observations upon an Article in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1819; CMP 90.

6: See Young-ok An at Green / Lapinski, pp.102-17.

will of course have read & heard how pertinaciously one half of the public believe you to be the conceal'd author of *Bertram* – I have ever treated the question mysteriously with a view to the power it w^d afford you of producing a play with the certainty of your name being conceal'd – No one but myself need know the secret ...⁷

On July 20th, Byron responded:

Tragedy – I have none, – an act – a first act of one⁸ – I had nearly finished some time before my departure from England – when events occurred which furnished me with so many real passions for time to come – that I had no attention for fictitious ones: – – The scenes I had scrawled are thrown with other papers & sketches into one of my trunks now in England – but into which I know not – nor care not – except that I should have been glad to have done anything you wished in my power, – but I have no power nor will to recommence – & surely – Maturin is your man – not I ...⁹

On February 3rd of the following year (Kinnaird having been forced to resign from Drury Lane), Byron wrote to him, with changed tone and much rephrasing:

I suppose & fear that your <row> {row} plagued you sufficiently – but what could be expected from the <scenes?> {Green=room?} – sooner or later you will have your revenge – & so shall I (in other matters) you on the stage <or off> & I <both on &> off & by Nemesis! – you shall build a new Drury – which shall pay one per Cent to the Subscribers – & I will write you a <play> {tragedy} which shall reduce your pounds to shillings – besides for my own particular injuries – (while this {play} is representing with much applause) <with> ordaining a proscription to which that of Sylla shall be a <comedy> comic Opera – & that of Collot d'Herbois at Lyons – a symphony. –¹⁰

Sulla's proscriptions in 82-1 BC involved the deaths of up to 9,000 Romans. Collot d'Herbois had 2,000 people executed in Lyons in 1793. Byron wants, with his proposed tragedy, to decimate the population of London.

By this time, he has, unknown to all, written most of *Manfred*. The manuscripts of *Manfred* are unusual in not being dated: but if I am correct

7: Kinnaird to B., July 9th 1816: text from NLS Ms.43455.

8: The first act of *Werner*, written late in 1815.

9: B. to Kinnaird, July 20th 1816: text from Ms. NLS TD 3079 f.1; BLJ V 82-3.

10: B. to Kinnaird, February 3rd 1817: text from B.L.Add.Mss.42093 ff.21-2; BLJ V 167-8.

in saying that Taylor's Pausanias is a vital subtext to the play's demonology (see below), we can date its commencement roughly, for Byron asks Hobhouse to bring that book as early as May 1st 1816.¹¹

On February 5th 1817 Byron wrote to Murray:

I forgot to mention to you – that a kind of poem in dialogue (in blank verse) or drama – from which “the Incantation” is an extract – begun last summer in Switzerland – is finished – it is in three acts – but of a very wild – metaphysical – and inexplicable kind. – Almost all the persons – but two or three – are Spirits of the earth & air – or the waters – the scene is in the Alps – the hero a kind of magician who is tormented by a species of remorse – <when> the cause of which is left half unexplained, – he wanders about invoking these spirits – which appear to him – & are of no use – he at last goes to the very abode of the Evil principle in propria persona – to evocate a ghost – which appears – & gives him an ambiguous & disagreeable answer – & in the 3^d. act he <dies> is found by his attendants dying in a tower – where he studied his art. – You may perceive by this outline that I have no great opinion of this piece of phantasy – but I <figure on> have at least rendered it quite impossible for the stage – for which <I have> my intercourse with D. Lane had given me the greatest contempt. – – – – –

I have not even copied it off – & feel too lazy at present to attempt the {whole – but} when I have I will send it you – & you may either throw it into the fire or not; – I would send you the rough copy as it is – but it would be illegible – & perhaps not less so when copied fair. – The “Incantation” was the conclusion – (a kind of Chorus) of the 1st. scene .. – – Nobody has seen it. – – I send you an extract. – from out act 2^d. –¹²

For the whole letter, see Appendix 1.

Notice that Byron makes no connection between the new work and Kinnaird's request for a tragedy, made the previous year (Murray and Kinnaird were not on good terms). But he's lying: he has *not* made it “quite impossible for the stage”: on the contrary, as Bernhard Reitz pointed out a long time ago,¹³ *Manfred*, with its spectacular Alpine scenes and infernal settings (“Arimanes on a ball of fire”, and so on), would have

11: BLJ V 74.

12: B. to Murray, February 15th 1817: text from NLS Ms.43489; first sheet only BLJ V 169-70.

13: Bernhard Reitz, *Byron's Praise of Sheridan*, in Bridzun, Petra and Pointner, Frank Erik (eds.): *Byron as Reader*, Essen 1999. Yet Timothy Morton (phrasing with care) describes *Manfred* as “impossible meaningfully to embody on a stage” (*Byron's Manfred and Ecocriticism*, in Stabler (ed.), *Byron Studies* (Palgrave 2007), p.155.

been no problem at all for the theatre which had put on Sheridan's *Pizarro*, with its settings in the Andes. *Manfred* is a real attempt at professional playwriting (unlike the later Venetian tragedies). At about an hour and a half in length, it gives plenty of evening-time for a farce beforehand and a ballet after; and its leading role is created for Edmund Kean, who specialised in angst-ridden parts, and whose distaste for rivals caused him to sack any good actors – or even mediocre actors – who he felt might upstage him. Thus the minor parts in *Manfred* act only as feeds for the protagonist's soliloquies and speeches. Kean disliked Maturin's *Bertram* because (a) the female lead was bigger than his own, and (b) because the actress who played it was – as many actresses were – taller than him.¹⁴ No protagonist could be more angst-ridden than Manfred: and neither the Chamois Hunter, the Witch of the Alps, Arimanes, nor the Abbot, has any lines or moments with which to upstage him. Astarte does upstage him, but only for fifteen seconds.

Byron's assertion that *Manfred* is not designed for the stage is one with his assurance to Murray that neither *Marino Faliero*¹⁵ nor *Sardanapalus*¹⁶ are political plays, or his assurance to Moore that *Heaven and Earth* is "very pious".¹⁷ In the same letter he asserts that *Werner* is not intended to be acted.

Of proletarian origin, Kean was a welcome guest at the dinner-tables of the great. If therefore we object to the play because of its "bourgeois ideology, which makes it complicit with hegemonic power",¹⁸ we have to blame Edmund Kean, to whose personality it's perfectly tailored.

On March 25th Byron pretended to come clean, and wrote to Kinnaird himself:

I have no tragedy nor tragedies – but a sort of metaphysical drama which I sent to Murray the other day – which is the very Antipodes of the stage and is meant to be so – it is all in the Alps & the other world – and as mad as Bedlam – I do not know that it is even fit for publication – the persons are all magicians – ghosts – & the evil principle – with a mixed mythology of my own – which you may suppose is somewhat of the strangest. — — —¹⁹

And only six days later, he added,

14: See Jeffrey Kahan, *The Cult of Kean* (Ashgate 2006), pp.31–6.

15: B. to Murray, from Ravenna, September 28th–29th 1820: (BLJ VII 181-2).

16: B. to Murray, from Ravenna, July 14th 1821: (BLJ VIII 151-2).

17: B. to Moore, from Pisa, March 4th 1822: (BLJ IX 118-19).

18: See Young-ok An at Green / Lapinski, p.105.

19: B. to Kinnaird, from Venice, March 25th 1817: text from Ms. NLS TD 3079 f.3; BLJ V 194-5.

As to tragedy, I may try one day – but never for the stage – don't you {see} I have no luck there? – my two addresses were not liked – & my Committee=ship did but get me into scrapes – no – no – I shall not tempt the Fates that way – besides I should risk more than I could gain – I have no right to encroach on other men's ground – even <I> if I could maintain my own. – – –

You tell me {that} Maturin's second tragedy²⁰ has failed – is not this an additional warning to everybody as well as to me? – however – if the whim seized me I should not consider that nor anything else – but the fact is that success on the stage is not to me an object of ambition – & I am not sure that it would please me to triumph – although it would doubtless vex me to fail. – – For these reasons I never will put it to the test. – Unless I could beat them all – it would be nothing – & who could do that? nor I nor any man – the Drama is complete already – there can be nothing like what has been. –²¹

This self-defeating attitude, in the plain face of the evidence, represents a fishing for reassurance on Byron's part. He wants Kinnaird to praise the piece, to see at once what an excellent vehicle it would make for Kean, and to persuade Drury Lane to mount it. Unfortunately for the timing, Kinnaird was no longer in charge of Drury Lane, and Kean hated him anyway. On November 3rd 1817, Monk Lewis told Byron,

... they say, that the rapture of Drury Lane from Kean to the Scene-Shifters inclusive, when D. Kinnaird's expulsion was announced, was something quite ludicrous.²²

Kinnaird never mentions *Manfred* in any surviving letter (though many of his letters are missing); and Byron's other close friend, Hobhouse (who was with Byron for most of the play's composition), mentions it in no document known to me. I imagine the incest-theme scared them.

Thus *Manfred*, which probably, because of the incest-theme, never stood a chance of being staged anywhere (Kean or no Kean), changes in its author's mind from a potential theatrical event to an act of revenge on England.

The tale illustrates Byron's antithetical, and self-defeating, attitude towards writing for the stage. In the introduction to *Marino Faliero* he sums it up:

20: *Manuel*.

21: B. to Kinnaird, March 31st 1817: text from B.L.Add.Mss.42093 ff.34-5; BLJ V 195-7.

22: Matthew Gregory Lewis to B., November 3rd 1817; text from NLS Acc.12604 / 4247G.

I have had no view to the stage; in its present state it is, perhaps, not a very exalted object of ambition; besides I have been too much behind the scenes to have thought it so at any time. And I cannot conceive any man of irritable feeling putting himself at the mercies of an audience – the sneering reader, and the loud critic, and the tart review, are scattered and distant calamities; but the trampling of an intelligent or of an ignorant audience on a production which, be it good or bad, has been a mental labour to the writer, is a palpable and immediate grievance, heightened by a man's doubt of their competency to judge, and his certainty of his own imprudence in electing them his judges. Were I capable of writing a play which could be deemed stageworthy, success would give me no pleasure, and failure great pain. It is for this reason that even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres, I never made the attempt, and never will.

“... even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres” he never thought of writing for the stage? In fact he did – *Werner* was started in late 1815, when he was still on the committee. Once he's left, not only the committee, but the country, he writes a practical play. However, terrified not only of failure, but success at a place with so debauched a taste as Drury Lane, he makes sure of its paradoxical unstageability by inserting an obvious incest-*motiv* which will render it impossible to put on. Then Kinnaid's sacking deprives him in any case of the one champion he might have had.

John Murray, William Gifford, and payment

On February 16th 1817 Byron announces *Manfred*, and gives Murray several passages from the play as specimens (see Appendix 1).²³ He encloses the first act on March 3rd, and the third act on March 9th (he doesn't mention sending the second act until April 2nd). Murray acknowledges receipt of the first act on March 18th (at first he calls the play “Manuel”, confusing it with the recent failure by Charles Maturin). William Gifford, his reader, and Byron's “Literary Father”, finds fault with the third act:

My dear Sir,

I found your parcel here at 4 – so that it is hardly possible to do any thing by Post time – nor indeed can I say much more. I have marked a

23: Not all this letter is in BLJ. See Cochran, “*Nobody has seen it*” - *Byron's First Letter Announcing Manfred*, *Byron Journal*, 1996, pp.68-76.

passage or two which might be omitted with advantage: but the Act²⁴ requires strengthening. There is nothing to bear it out but one speech. The Friar is despicable, & the servants uninteresting. The scene with the Friar ought to be imposing, & for that purpose the Friar should be a real good man – not an idiot. More dignity should be lent to the catastrophe. See how beautifully our old poet Marlow has wrought up the death of Faustus – Several of our old plays have scenes of this kind – but they strove to make them impressive. *Manfred* should not end in this feeble way – after beginning with such magnificence & promise – & the demons should have something to do with the scene.

Do not send my words to Lord B. but you may take a hint from them – Say too that the last Act bears no proportion in length to the two previous.²⁵

... and on March 28th Murray sends Byron Gifford's criticisms:

My Lord

I received the last Act with yr favour of the 9th yesterday & now I inclose a proof both of the Second and Third Acts – with the Title Dram Pers – &c – all for correction & emendation – by the way there are several errors wch may affront you as not existing in the Original – wch are owing to the haste with wch my family transcribed them – as I am anxious to preserve the original with wch I had not time to compare it – & having at first, after transcribing sent it to M^r G –

For the Drama Do me the favour to draw upon me for 300 Gs when + you please – & I hope to make a living profit upon it –

<No> I told you in my last letter that M^r G was very much pleased with Act 2 – & as you know he takes a paternal interest in your literary well being – he does not by any Means like the Conclusion – now I am venturing upon the confidence with wch your Lordship has ever honoured me in sending the inclosed²⁶ – I fear I am not doing right – I am not satisfied – but I venture – & I entreat that you will make a point of returning them. I have told him that I have made a Letter from them – but there is so much friendly good sense in them that I can not refrain – I am sure you can – & I am almost sure that you will improve what begins & continues so beautifully in <J> a Drama of any Kind – the last Act is the Difficulty & this you must surmount –²⁷

24: Act III of *Manfred*, which Gifford has just read in its first, comic version.

25: Note from William Gifford to John Murray, late March 1817: source: NLS Acc.12604.

26: Murray has enclosed Gifford's note on the need to re-write *Manfred's* third act (see previous item).

27: John Murray to B., from 50, Albemarle Street, London, March 28th 1817; text from NLS Ms.43495; LJM 218-19.

Byron receives this on April 17th, and at once promises a re-write:

The third {act} is certainly d—d bad – & like the Archbishop of Grenada's homily (which savoured of the palsy)²⁸ has the dregs of my fever – during which it was written. – It must on no account be published in its present state; – I will try & reform it – or re write it altogether – but the impulse is gone – & I have no chance of making anything out of it. – I would not have it published as it is on any account. – The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of <it> {this act} I thought good myself – the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be – & I wonder what the devil possessed me – I am very glad indeed that you <told> {sent} me M^r. Gifford's opinion without deduction – do you suppose me such a Sotheby as not to be very much obliged to him? – or that in fact I was not & am not convinced <of the> & convicted in my conscience of the absurdity of this same overt act of nonsense? – I shall try at it again – in the mean time lay it upon the Shelf (the whole drama, I mean) but pray correct your copies of the 1st. & 2^d. acts by the original MS. — — —²⁹

The possibility that he's tried consciously for an anti-climactic, comical ending to *Manfred*, and has been shamed by Gifford's reaction, should be entertained. He sends his "improved" third act on May 5th. In a letter which we lack, Murray offers 600 guineas for *Manfred* plus *The Lament of Tasso* – less than a third of what he offered for *Childe Harold* III. Strangely, the Murray ledger records no payment for either poem (later Byron says he only got 300 pounds for *Manfred*).³⁰

In the semi-comical finale, the materialist Abbot who comes to save Manfred's soul (on condition that he makes a donation of all his worldly goods to the monastery), is dismissed thus, when Manfred summons the demon Ashtaroath:

Abbot: I fear thee not – hence – hence –

Avant thee, evil One! help – ho – without there!

Manfred: Carry this man to the Shreckhorn – to it's peak –

To it's extremest peak – watch with him there

From now till Sunrise – let him gaze & know

He neer again will be so near to Heaven –

But harm him not – & when the Morrow breaks

Set him down safe in his cell – Away with him! –

28: See Le Sage, *Gil Blas*, VII 4.

29: B. to John Murray, from Venice, April 14th 1817 (i): text from NLS Ms.43489; BLJ V 213-4.

30: Alice Levine at MSYR I p.23 says £315.

Ashtaroeth: Had I not better bring his brethren too
Convent & all to bear him company?

Manfred: No, this will serve for the present. Take him up. –

Ashtaroeth: Come Friar! Now an Exorcism or two
And we shall fly the lighter. –

(Ashtaroeth disappears with the Abbot, singing as follows)

A prodigal son – and a maid undone –

And a widow re=wedded within the year –

And a worldly Monk – and a pregnant Nun –

Are things which every day appear. – (original III i 69-85)

It is hard to judge whether this conclusion was a result of Byron's calculation, or his carelessness, confusion, and eagerness to finish. Whatever the case, Gifford objected to its profanity, and Byron, cowed, substituted the third act as printed, which is profounder and more dignified, but less well-aimed at the low tastes of Drury Lane.

It could be that when Byron says “quite impossible for the stage” he is referring not to the play's scenic demands, but to its action – of which there is virtually none before the last scene. Ninety percent of the script is exposition either implicit or explicit, and when the exposition finishes, Manfred dies (see Appendix). Even the exposition is incomplete in that we never know exactly who Manfred's beloved Astarte was, or in what manner she died. Byron, as was his habit, tantalises us with hints of damnable transgression, but never comes clean as to its nature.

Kean never played the part of Manfred.

The Incantation, and Byron's “nightmare of my own delinquencies”³¹

Stanzas 5, 6 and 7 of this controversial passage (I i 192-261) seem, firstly to bring in a note of accusation against (perhaps) Manfred (though that's disputed), a note which is not supported by the first five stanzas.³² Whether the last three are to be directed at Manfred, or at the audience, whether they are biographical reflections on Annabella or are self-flagellations by Byron directed at himself (my own preferred interpretation), is disputed;

31: B. to Moore, from Venice, January 28th 1817; BLJ V 164-7.

32: See Chew, p.59n. In the Morgan manuscript stanzas 5 and 6 follow stanza 7 (MSYR I pp.43-4): though this may indicate that B. started on the wrong side of the sheet: the final stage-direction is correctly placed, after stanza 7.

what no-one has pointed out is that they imitate, in their address to hypocrisy and false seeming, Coleridge's *Christabel*, a work which we know Byron admired.³³

And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel –
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance! –
One moment – and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline. (*Christabel*, ll.573-96)

Byron's marriage had broken up largely because of his own insensible brutality. Doubtless his facetiousness and Annabella's lack of humour were incompatible (though she could and did joke), but firing pistols at the ceiling as she lay confined, making his preference for his half-sister obvious, and asking, on the birth of their daughter, if the baby was a monster, were not the acts of a normally disaffected husband. His method of throwing her out, by telling her she could take the carriage ("When you are disposed to leave London it would be convenient that a day should be fixed, & (if possible) not a very remote one for that purpose")³⁴ even though she had expressed neither desire nor intention to leave, was cunning. Voluntarily – for she was in fear of her life – she did what he

33: "Christabel" – I won't have you sneer at Christabel – it is a fine wild poem": B. to Murray, from Diodati, September 30th 1816; BLJ II 107-9; also BLJ IV 331.

34: BLJ V 15.

wanted her to do, even though it went against her conscience as a Christian wife.

Her great offence was that she had, in the shape of their daughter, presented Byron with irrefutable evidence that he was no longer a child himself.³⁵

Byron's elaborate pretence – which he sustained for the rest of his life – that he had no idea why she left him, is transparent hypocrisy: his request to Lord Holland, Rogers and Kinnauld, to provide evidence that he had never criticised her (as if that proved anything) shows him to be in a weird state of denial. His extraordinary attack on his wife's companion Mrs Clermont, in *A Sketch from Private Life*, is self-chastisement, displaced, re-sexed, and exhibited publicly:

If like a snake she steals within your walls,
Till the black slime betray her as she crawls;
If like a viper to the heart she wind,
And leave the venom there she did not find; –
What marvel that this hag of hatred works
Eternal evil latent as she lurks
To make a Pandemonium where she dwells,
And reign the Hecate of domestic Hells?

(*Sketch*, 47-54)

But a “domestic Hell” is what he, not Mrs Clermont, had created.

Such virulence changes, in the Incantation, into a tone more measured but no less powerful:

By thy cold breast – and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulphs of Guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy,
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed for human – thine own heart,
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! – and compell
Thyself to be thy proper Hell! (I i 242-51)

Looked at in a broader perspective, Manfred's despair is Byron's own despair at his own failure as a man: Astarte is neither Annabella nor

35: See CHP III 72, 4-7: “I can see / Nothing to loathe in Nature, save to be / A link reluctant in a fleshly chain, / Classed among creatures ...”

Augusta, but an embodiment of his *anima*, the Significant Female Other whom his inner demons had caused him to reject – as it seemed to him in the summer of 1816 – for good.

However, the problem with the Incantation remains: not just, to whom is it directed? not just, does it all relate to a single addressee? But most important – does Manfred even hear it, for has he not collapsed straight after the speeches of the Spirits? Does he hear it in a vision, while unconscious?

Chew sums up the problem:

I am not sure that *The Incantation* was originally part of any drama at all; certainly it fits but imperfectly into the context of *Manfred*.³⁶

In European terms, *Manfred* was the most celebrated and influential of all Byron's works. It was translated into German, for instance, eighteen times during the nineteenth century – once by Wagner's uncle (I believe Manfred metamorphoses into Wotan). Byron had little idea, at first, what he had written, until his anger at the way Murray and Gifford interfered with his text forced him to realise how proprietorial he felt about it.

Some mystery surrounds the play's writing. Its draft manuscript is – unusually for Byron – undated, and Hobhouse, who may be supposed to have been with Byron for much of the time of its composition, appears never to register that it is in progress.³⁷ If I am right, and the notes to Thomas Taylor's translation of Pausanias are a major influence on the way Byron creates its demon-hierarchy, then he is already thinking about it between May 1st (when he is at Brussels) and June 23rd 1816 (when he is at Evian) for he asks, as I've said, Hobhouse for Taylor's book on those dates;³⁸ and as Hobhouse arrives at Diodati on August 26th (with Taylor's Pausanias, we must assume: he promises on July 9th to bring it)³⁹ it's unlikely that anything beyond the very first scene was written before late August. The Alpine scenes in Act I and II bear a close relationship with Byron's Alpine Journal (September 17th-29th), as the notes below will show; but, as Jerome McGann writes,⁴⁰ stanzas 5 and 6 of the Incantation

36: Chew p.59.

37: See Cochran, "*Nobody has seen it*" – *Byron's First Letter Announcing Manfred*, *Byron Journal*, 1996, pp.68–76.

38: BLJ V 74 and 80.

39: Hobhouse to B., July 9th 1816 (NLS Ms.43442; BB 228-9).

40: CPW III 464.

in the first scene is on paper with a *fleur-de-lys* watermark of a kind Byron used in 1813 and 1814. The Incantation was fair-copied, in July 1816, by Claire Claremont, in the notebook which also contains her version of *Childe Harold III*, and had already been published in late November or early December 1816, in *The Prisoner of Chillon, and Other Poems*. See my comments and notes for the suspicion of a link between the Incantation and Coleridge's *Christabel*.

The revised and received Third Act seems to have been drafted at Rome by May 5th 1817,⁴¹ Byron having arrived in that city on April 29th.

Manfred is a much deeper fellow than any of Byron's previous protagonists; Childe Harold makes no pretence to being a philosopher, or a theologian of dualism, still less a sun-worshipper, and The Giaour, Conrad, Selim and Alp appear not to bother with the questions which have obsessed Manfred; though his indifference and hostility to Christianity is shared by The Giaour, at least.

The play borrows from so many mythologies that even Byron was self-conscious about it: "... a mixed mythology of my own – which you may suppose is somewhat of the strangest" was the way he alerted Kinnaird, on March 25th 1817:⁴² an "Olla Podrida" was what his concoction was called in an early review, by William Roberts.⁴³ Peacock, always on the alert for absurdities in Byron, gives a note to *Nightmare Abbey*:

According to Mr. Toobad, the present period would be the reign of Ahrimanes. Lord Byron seems to be of the same opinion, by the use he has made of Ahrimanes in "Manfred"; where the great Alastor, or Καρχος Δαίμων, of Persia, is hailed king of the world by the Nemesis of Greece, in concert with three of the Scandinavian Valkyræ, under the name of the Destinies; the astrological spirits of the alchemists of the middle ages; an elemental witch, transplanted from Denmark to the Alps; and a chorus of Dr. Faustus's devils, who come in the last act for a soul. It is difficult to conceive where this heterogeneous mythological company could have originally met, except at a table d'hôte, like the six kings in "Candide".⁴⁴

41: See Cochran, "A higher and more extended comprehension": B.'s three weeks in Rome, *Keats-Shelley Review* 2001, pp.49-63. See also *Byron and Italy* (CSP 2012), pp.99-118.

42: BLJ V 195.

43: *The British Critic*, 2nd series, VIII, July 1817, RR BI 275.

44: Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, note to Chapter IV.

Peacock omits the Neo-Platonist Thomas Taylor, from whom Byron derived the revolutionary idea that Man could damn himself without help from any Evil Principle. As George Sand wrote, Manfred is "... Faust délivré de l'odieuse compagnie de Méphistophélès".⁴⁵ It is the superiority Manfred displays to all the transcendental powers he encounters which makes him worrying. He is equally indifferent to the persuasions of Chamois-hunters, witches, demons and abbots, and is self-destructive purely on his own terms – not at all like Faust, or Faustus, who need and receive help in their self-destruction (and redemption, in the case of Faust). Manfred has no-one to blame for his own doom but himself; he is *cunning* in *[his] overthrow*, / *The careful pilot of [his] proper woe*.

Behind Manfred's need for oblivion at all costs may be Byron's self-horror at the way, late in 1815 and early in 1816, he had wilfully destroyed the happiness of a wife who loved him, whom he despised because she loved him, and whom he had forced to leave their home, shortly after she had born him their child. His behaviour had, as explained, been so extreme that many about him were convinced that he was either ill or insane. Astarte – all that *Manfred* offers by way of heroine – is often taken, by those intent on creating sensation at all costs, to be a version of his half-sister Augusta; but I'd argue that in her remoteness and verbal economy Astarte is closer to Annabella. Annabella could be a very effective rhetorician (on paper, in private), but in public she said as little as possible. Even her statements about Byron's cruelty – made to convince her family and legal advisers that she had a good case – are understated. He married the woman to whom, even in 1812, he was comparing to Emma in Maria Edgeworth's *The Modern Griselda*,⁴⁶ knowing her to be, in her infinite patience, his perfect victim. The manipulative hypocrisy whereby, knowing that the outcome would be cruel and disastrous, he made her his wife, and his affectation of not understanding what, when she left the house, all the fuss was about, seem gross even after two centuries, and deserve the implicit critique he made of them himself in *Manfred*:

By thy cold breast – and serpent smile
By thy unfathomed gulphs of Guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye –
By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy,
By the perfection of thine art

45: *Essai sur le drame fantastique: Gæthe, Byron, Mickiewicz: Revue des Deux Mondes*, December 1st 1839, p.612.

46: BLJ II 199; Emma is the gentle, charitable heroine, contrasting with the eponymous one.

Which passed for human thine own heart
 By thy delight in others' pain
 And by thy brotherhood of Cain –
 I call upon thee! and compell
 Thyself to be thy proper hell. – (I i 242-51)

In so far as he knows himself to have placed himself beyond the pale of human tolerance, Manfred *is* Byron.

The play's pattern

A *possible* reason for Byron's assertion that he made *Manfred* quite impossible for the stage is that it contains no external conflict, and thus no action. Manfred has no antagonist that he cannot defeat with contemptuous ease: he's Hamlet with no uncle, Macbeth with no Macduff, Lear with no daughters – and, as we've seen, Faust with no Mephistopheles. His conflict is all inward. Two movements run counter to one another in him: his stressful approach to death, and the paradoxical way in which, the nearer he comes to dying, the more serene he becomes. He has two major crises: his collapse before the Incantation in I i, and his seeming rejection by the spirit of Astarte in II iv, which his huge stoicism now enables him to survive – for this time he doesn't collapse. But, after his address to the Sun in III ii, and his meditation on the Coliseum in III iv, we must understand him to have gained (or regained) a spiritual calm, for he has forgotten both the Incantation and Astarte, and has no trouble in summoning-up the confidence and energy which enables him to repel the Spirits which Come For Him in the last scene.

Whether this progress is convincing in terms of dramatic or psychological consistency is a question to be asked. Samuel Claggett Chew⁴⁷ ignores the problem; Akiko Yamada⁴⁸ finds the clue in Manfred's own visions of the eagle, the waterfall, the sun, and the Coliseum, which enable him to break out of his previous "solipsistic purgatory".⁴⁹ Manfred, she argues, "is being gradually *humanized* through a series of interviews with mostly *non-human* beings."⁵⁰ Timothy Morton⁵¹ enlarges Yamada

47: Chew, pp.59-86. Moore writes of "Those verses, too, entitled "The Incantation," which he introduced afterwards, without any connection with the subject, into Manfred ..." (Moore's Life, p.288).

48: *Two Landscapes from Manfred – A Process of Byron's Healing*, in Bachinger (ed.) *Byronic Negotiations* (Peter Lang 2002), pp.117-33.

49: Ibid, p.122.

50: Ibid, p.124.

51: *Byron's Manfred and Ecocriticism*, in Stabler (ed.), *Byron Studies* (Palgrave 2007), pp.155-70.

with an ecological analysis, which he lards with things like

Jerome McGann and Jane Stabler have elucidated the extent to which Byron's irony involves a perilous, Kirkegaardian dance on the volcano of nothingness.⁵²

Gordon Spence⁵³ has a negative answer: Manfred wins by defiance, not acceptance. Spence argues that the Spirits are presented, like those in *The Ancient Mariner* and *Tam O'Shanter*, as part subjective projections of Manfred, part as possessing objective reality. The "psychological progress that he [*Manfred*] makes in the course of the poem"⁵⁴ lies in the way that by the end "Manfred has freed himself not only from the creatures of the Abbot's imagination but also from his own".⁵⁵ Andrew Stauffer⁵⁶ also concentrates on the Spirits as externalisations of Manfred's inner state: whether that state alters, ripens or matures, he doesn't discuss.

If by "Sublime" we mean a quality in the thing observed which creates a not unpleasant sense of our own insignificance, then we could develop the argument of Akiko Yamada by saying that Manfred learns lessons from Sublimity. Here he contemplates the eagle:

Aye

Thou winged & cloud=cleaving Minister!
Whose happy flight is highest into heaven
Well mayst thou swoop so near me – I should be
Thy prey & gorge thine Eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee but thine
Yet pierces downward – onward – or above
With a pervading vision: – beautiful –
How beautiful is all this visible World!
How glorious in it's action & itself,
But we, who name ourselves it's sovereigns – we
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
A conflict of it's elements – & breathe
The breath of degradation & of pride
Contending with low wants & lofty will
Till our Mortality predominates,

52: Ibid., p.167.

53: *The Supernatural in Manfred*, 2004 BJ, pp.1-8.

54: Ibid., p.4.

55: Ibid., p.7.

56: *Manfred and his Problems*, in Vigouroux, Christiane (ed.) *Lord Byron: Correspondence(s)* (2008), pp.135-43.

And men are – what they name not to themselves
And trust not to each other. (I ii 29-47)

The beauty of the visible world isn't something which, in his search for infinite wisdom, Manfred ever noticed – thus bringing the validity of that wisdom into question. This is not a doubt which he articulates at the time, partly because he knows it in advance, albeit in an abstract sense: "The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life" (I i 12). The sound of the Shepherd's pipe, which follows at once, has the same humbling effect, as do the sights of the rainbow, the Witch herself, the Sun, and, in its different way, the Coliseum: all of them aspects of "Life". The success of Manfred's conscious, agonised search for meaning (described via exposition), is revealed as flawed by the realisations which (in the present action of the play), occur to him – without his looking for them. The world tries to teach Manfred a lesson in humility, which he only partly learns: as the late-added epigraph says, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in [*his*] philosophy".

Byron's own experience in the Alps had suggested the possibility of such an experience faced with Sublimity, although he had been unable to attain it:

I was disposed to be pleased – I am a lover of Nature – and an Admirer of Beauty – I can bear fatigue – & welcome privation – and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. – But in all this – the recollections of bitterness – & more especially of recent & more home desolation – which must accompany me through life – have preyed upon me here – and neither the music of the Shepherd – the crashing of the Avalanche – nor the torrent – the mountain – the Glacier – the Forest – nor the Cloud – have for one moment – lightened the weight upon my heart – nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory – around – above – & beneath me. – I am past reproaches – and there is a time for all things – I am past the wish of vengeance – and I know of none like for what I have suffered – but the hour will come – when what I feel must be felt – & the – – but enough. – – (*Alpine Journal*, September 29th [28th?] 1816)

In this context, we may read Manfred's experiences of Sublimity as compensations for his creator's failures.

Manfred and Cain

Manfred stands at the end of the path to infinite knowledge at the start of which Cain stands, thus making Byron's 1821 play what we should call a

“prequel” to his 1816 / 17 one. That *Manfred* has no need of divine guidance – or indeed any guidance – on his path to understanding, where Cain couldn’t achieve it without Lucifer, makes *Cain* more, not less conservative, than its predecessor. In *Manfred*, divinity, in as far as it is implied at all, is variously depicted, as Peacock jestingly wrote: in *Cain* it is clearly present, and would appear, from the evidence, malign – as in *Prometheus Bound*.

Both protagonists finish unhappily – *Manfred* ends in defiance, Cain in wretchedness.

Contemporary Reactions

Many reviewers were too polite to say in what way they felt Byron had gone too far with *Manfred*, but inferring what they meant wasn’t hard:

This drama is interesting, yet there are in it domestic allusions, from which works of a dramatic nature should ever be free.⁵⁷

Manfred has exiled himself from society; and what is to be the ground of our compassion for the exile? Simply the commission of one of the most revolting of crimes. He has committed incest!⁵⁸

We hope, for the sake of manhood and morality, that the rumour is incorrect which has identified his inmost feelings with the subject before us ...⁵⁹

The same reviewer even implied the play should be banned, on the grounds that it makes incest attractive:

We sincerely recommend Lord Byron to reflect upon the dangers that may accrue to youth and inexperience from a collision with his popular pages, if crime is again to be invested with a garment that moral truth should tear in abhorrence from her polluted shoulders. This book must either be suppressed, or we shall proscribe it altogether.⁶⁰

Many also objected to what they saw as its slipshod qualities, in versification and linguistic precision:

57: *La Belle Assemblée* 1817; at *The Romantics Reviewed*, ed. Reiman, Garland 1972 (“RR”), 107.

58: *Gentleman’s Magazine* July 1817; RR 1107.

59: *Theatrical Inquisitor* August 1817; RR 2266.

60: *Ibid.*, RR 2269.

Though generally flowing, vigorous and sonorous, it is too often slovenly and careless to a great degree; and there are in the very finest passages, so many violations of the plainest rules of blank verse, that we suspect Lord Byron has a very imperfect knowledge of that finest of all music, and has yet much to learn before his language can be well adapted to dramatic compositions.⁶¹

In the invocation [*I i 28 et seq: Mysterious Agency!*] our readers will clearly perceive, that Lord Byron had the Prospero of Shakespeare in his view, but we cannot complement him on the success of his imitation. How can a “spirit dwell in subtler essence?” The essence of a spirit may perhaps be called subtle; but how a spirit, or any thing else, can dwell in essence (except it be of anchovies), we are at a loss to comprehend.⁶²

Others objected to Byron’s plagiarism:

Now the whole of this idea [*II iv, opening: The Hymn of the Spirits to Arimanes*] is taken almost word for word from a very silly and disgusting tale, entitled VATHEK, which for various reasons we have omitted to notice ...⁶³

The play was questioned from the point of view of incident, character, and theological consistency:

Upon this non-descript species of drama our observations will be but few. Of incident it has but little, of plot it has none. There is nothing to interest attention, nothing to raise expectation. Of the hero we know nothing, we are taught nothing, and therefore we care nothing. In the characters there is nothing remarkable, except a strange jumble of all the mythologies which ever existed. The fire worship of the Persians, the Nemesis of the Greeks, the fairy tales of our nursery, are brought into action, and what is worst of all, are combined with the appearance of Christianity. The least that can be said of this Olla Podrida is, that in taste it is execrable, in execution absurd.⁶⁴

Byron’s qualifications as a playwright were called into question:

It would be an idle parade of criticism to enter into the merits of this performance, as a specimen of dramatic composition. It has none of the

61: John Wilson in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* June 1817; RR 124.

62: *British Critic* July 1817; RR 271.

63: *Ibid*; RR 273.

64: *Ibid*; RR 275.

properties of this kind of writing, but the division into scenes, and the conduct of the story by the means of dialogue. It affords, indeed, a pretty good ground for inferring the unfitness of the poet for this province of the art.⁶⁵

Even Francis Jeffrey, who had a high opinion of the work (see below), wrote:

This piece is properly entitled a dramatic Poem – for it is merely poetical, and is not at all a drama or play in the modern acceptation of that term.⁶⁶

The play is written with all that intensity of thought, with all that depth and force of colouring, so peculiar to the works of the noble author. The character of Manfred is sketched with a strong and masterly hand, nor have any pains been spared to clothe the preternatural ministers that are introduced, with the sublime horrors that belong to their “sightless substances;” but having no diversity of incident or plot, this tragedy, however adapted for the closet, is quite unfitted for the stage, where, indeed, it has not been offered, and could not possibly appear but to disadvantage. Lord Byron is not to be comprehended by every one, and least of all by the *crowd*.⁶⁷

Byron was accused of being interested only in extremes of human deformity:

The mischief that lurks in all Lord Byron’s productions is this – they are lying representations of human nature; they bring qualities of a most contradictory kind into close alliance; and so shape them into seeming union as to confound sentiments, which, for the sake of sound morality and social security, should be for ever kept contrasted, and at polar extremities with respect to each other.⁶⁸

Shakspeare has seldom conceived a monster, and then brought him but rarely into action; Lord Byron’s joy in the contemplation of monsters.⁶⁹

Here is language full of nerve, and poetry clad in beauty, but like the splendid garb of a dwarf, or the fabled mantle of a giant, they cannot hide the form of deformity, or cheat us into a belief that we behold “nature’s

65: William Roberts in *The British Review* August 1817; RR 453.

66: Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review* August 1817; RR 882.

67: *Lady’s Monthly Museum* August 1817; RR 1251.

68: *British Review* August 1817; RR 453.

69: *Critical Review* June 1817; RR 670.

fair proportion".⁷⁰

One voice alone stood out in the midst of this outraged conventionality; it was that of Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*. His appreciative account started,

This is a very strange – not a very pleasing – but unquestionably a very powerful and most poetical production.

... and concluded with a comparison of *Manfred* with *Dr Faustus*:

But these, and many other smooth and fanciful verses in this curious old drama [*Dr Faustus*], prove nothing, we think, against the originality of *Manfred*; for there is nothing to be found there of the pride, the abstraction, and the heartrooted misery in which that originality consists. *Faustus* is a vulgar sorcerer, tempted to sell his soul to the Devil for the ordinary price of sensual pleasure, and earthly power and glory – and who shrinks and shudders in agony when the forfeit comes to be exacted. The style, too, of Marlow, though elegant and scholarlike, is weak and childish compared with the depth and force of much of what we have quoted from Lord Byron; and the disgusting buffoonery and low farce of which his piece is principally made up, place it much more in contrast, than in any terms of comparison, with that of his noble successor. In the tone and pitch of the composition, as well as in the character of the diction in the more solemn parts, the piece before us reminds us much more of the Prometheus of Æschylus, than of any more modern performance. The tremendous solitude of the principal person – the supernatural beings with whom alone he holds communion – the guilt – the firmness – the misery – are all points of resemblance to which the grandeur of the poetic imagery only gives a more striking effect. The chief differences are, that the subject of the Greek poet was sanctified and exalted by the established belief of his country, and that his terrors are nowhere tempered with the sweetness which breathes from so many passages of his English rival.⁷¹

For Byron's response, see his letter to Murray of October 12th 1817 (BLJ V 267-9).

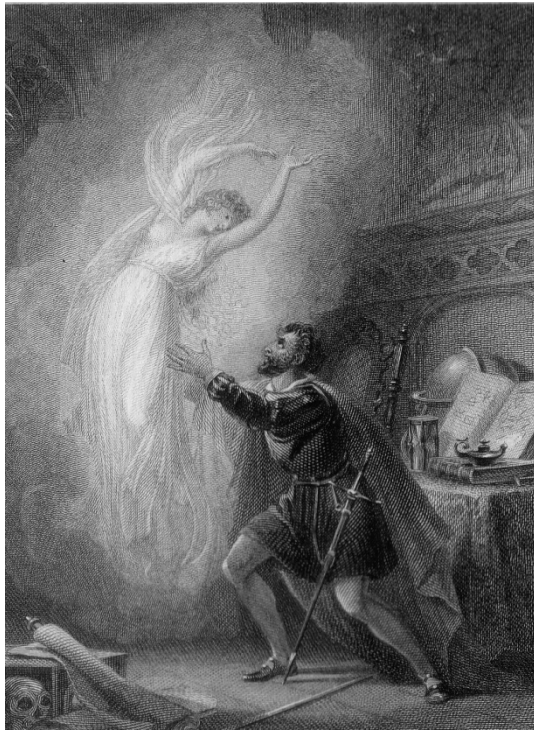
70: *European Magazine* August 1817; RR 962.

71: Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review*; RR 888.

MANFRED

LORD BYRON

TEXT BASED ON BYRON'S MANUSCRIPTS



Finden's engravings: Manfred and Astarte. Notice Manfred's sword.

The text of this edition is based on the rough draft at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, and principally on the fair copy and associated letter at the National Library of Scotland, collated with the first edition and the editions of E.H. Coleridge and J.J. McGann. It presents the play in a form as close as possible to the way in which it was written – with Byron’s spelling, capitalization, and a plethora of dashes, which readers can interpret in various ways.¹

Material in italics represents Byron’s first thoughts for Act III. For the story of its rejection, see notes.

The manuscripts

Ashtarothe’s song is said to be the first part of *Manfred* to have been composed. It is on a separate sheet in the Morgan rough draft (see MSYR Byron I pp.131-2). Jerome McGann and Alice Levine (CPW IV pp.463-3 and MSYR Byron I p.25) say that it is written on paper dated 1808, but probably written on in 1812-13, as is the Incantation.

Claire Claremont’s transcription of The Incantation (I i 192-261) is on pp.206-10 of NLS MS. 43326. This book is taken up mainly with Claire’s transcription of *Childe Harold* III. It is now half-bound in green leather and is mainly of thick white wove paper (pp.139-42 are slightly thinner,

1: “Manfred’s syntax may not be grammatically broken ... but dashes unjoin words and ideas that could, metrically and intellectually, flow continuously. Implicit in the pauses signalled by those dashes are dark, unvoiced thoughts – which might be expected of a morbidly negative man whose worldview seems to be ‘give me oblivion or give me death’” (Peter Graham, *Byron, Manfred, Negativity and Freedom* at Beatty, Howe and Robinson (eds.) *Liberty and Poetic Licence*, Liverpool 2008, p.53). “Manfred [*speaks*] in phrases punctuated by starts and stops” (Katherine Kernberger, *Manfred’s Quarrel with Immortality* (Ibid., p.64). Of the Alpine Journal – parallel document to *Manfred* – Ian Balfour writes, “[Byron’s] telegraphic notation – with its plethora of paratactic dashes – is well suited to the discontinuous, rupturing mode of the sublime” (*Genres of the Sublime* in Curtis (ed.), *Byron and the Romantic Sublime*, Moncton 2005, p.12). “We are aware, if not always consciously, of the gaps or dashes [*in Werner*] that signify altered intentions and apparent deletions and serve to contribute to the distinctive feeling of reading a poem by Byron rather than by another Romantic poet. The dashes could be considered as a theatrical feature because they help to suggest ongoing time and the potential for the action to venture into unanticipated territory. They are another part of Byron’s way of continually presenting himself as if he were present, if only to the mind’s eye” (Jonathon Shears, *Byron’s Aposiopesis, Romanticism* 14.2 2008, p.186).

and there are two inserts) with two watermarks visible occasionally:

“Dusorm” or “Dyorm” (in sheets 27-8, 119-20, 147-8, 207-8)

“J Leiselles” (in sheets 49-50, 51-2, 121-2, 133-4, 141-2, 171-2)

Byron prefaces the Incantation with

“(The following poem was a Chorus in an unfinished Witch drama – which was begun some years ago.)”

This indicates that, in July 1816, either *Manfred* was not started, or that Byron had no intention at that stage of putting the Incantation into it. Claire left Byron at Diodati on August 25th 1816.

Rough draft (Morgan MA 59, Folios 9-36)

Sheets 1 to 4 of the rough draft are cut. They are light blue, laid and cut, 8 7/8 x 5 1/4cm, with the watermark sometimes of a quill, and sometimes what appear to be the words EMUNER BERN.

Sheet 5 of the rough draft, containing the Incantation, is different from the paper on which the rest of Act I is written. It is light blue-grey, laid, 16 1/2 x 13 1/2cm, with the watermark of WH and a fleur-de-lys.

Sheet 6 of the rough draft is, like sheets 1-4, light blue, laid, cut, 8 7/8 x 5 1/4cm, with the watermark sometimes of a quill, and sometimes what appear to be the words EMUNER BERN. Act I scene ii starts on the top of its first side.

Sheet 7 of the rough draft is tan, laid, 9 7/8 x 15 1/8cm, with the watermark GM / MAZZOLA.

The first sheet of the letter to Murray of 15th January is in white wove paper, with the watermark 1808 / J.RUSE / BONDON, which is the same as that in the rough draft Sheets 9, 13-21, added leaf g (Ashtaroth's Song), and in the fair copy Sheets 1-6 and 17-22. The second sheet of the letter is of white laid paper with no visible watermark.

Sheet 8 of the rough draft is pale blue, laid, 14 3/8 x 9 7/8cm, with the watermark Monti and an angel blowing a clarion. Act II scene i starts halfway down its second side.

Sheet 9 of the rough draft is, like sheets 13-21, white, wove, 16 ¼ x 9 5/8cm, with the watermark 1808 / J.RUSE / BONDON. It thus matches the paper of which Sheets 1-6 and 17-21 of the fair copy are made, as well as that of first sheet of the letter to Murray of February 15th 1817.

Sheets 10, 11 and 12 of the rough draft are white, wove, 14 x 9 3/8cm, with the watermark ARG Bertini. Act II scene ii starts near the top of Sheet 10.

All the rest of the rough draft is, like sheets 9 and 14-21, white, wove, 16 ¼ x 9 5/8cm, with the watermark 1808 / J.RUSE / BONDON. It is thus identical with Sheets 1-6 and 17-22 of the fair copy, and the first sheet of the letter to Murray of January 15th 1817. Act II scene iii starts halfway down Sheet 13 side 2; the first version of Act III starts near the top of Sheet 17 side 3. III ii (first version) starts near the bottom of Sheet 19 side 3; and the play originally ended on Sheet 21 side 2.

Five additional sheets in the rough draft contain the revised Act III. They are white, laid, 14 7/8 x 9 ¼cm, with no visible watermark. III ii is unchanged from the first version, and so is not in the new one; III iii from the Abbot saying "Where is your master?" to the end is on Sheet 3 sides 1 and 2; III iv on the third side of the third sheet, and the play now ends on the second side of the sixth sheet. Ashtaroth's song (not in the revised Act III) fills two more sides.

MSYR I Byron claims that two lines are in the rough draft which are not in the fair copy and are thus missing from the first edition, by accident: II i 87 ("My wrongs were all on those I should have cherished")² and II ii 168 ("This heaving burthen, this accursed breath").³ These are restored at CPW IV 70 and 76. In fact there is a third missing line, II ii 87 ("And weary vigils, and unbroken fasts"),⁴ which is in no edition until this one. For discussion, see the relevant notes.

Also undeciphered until now is the whole text of the rough-draft prose note to II ii 94, which reads "+ the Philosopher Iamblichus – the story of the raising of Eros & Anteros may be found in his Life by Eunapius – <or quoted in the notes to Taylor's Pausanias>"; rough draft, bottom of Sheet 11 sides 2 and 3. See MSYR I Byron pp.66–7.

2: MSYR Byron I p.60. For a discussion, see note to the line.

3: MSYR Byron I p.71.

4: MSYR Byron I p.66.

Fair copy (JMA / NLS Ms. 43335)

The fair copy is bound in dark navy blue, with gold-tooled edges. It contains 28 sheets. The first six sheets are white, wove, 8 1¼ x 9½cm, with a watermark 1808 / J.RUSE / BONDON – the same as the first sheet of the letter to Murray, and sheets 9 and 14-21 of the rough draft. Act I scene ii starts at the top of Sheet 4 side 2.

The first sheet of the letter to Murray of 15th January (see Appendix 1) is in white wove paper, with the watermark 1808 / J.RUSE / BONDON, which is the same as that in the rough draft Sheets 9, 13-21, added leaf g (Ashtarothe's Songs), and in the fair copy Sheets 1-6 and 17-22. The second sheet of the letter is of white laid paper with no visible watermark.

Sheet 6 side 2 of the fair copy is blank, and sides 3 and 4 are cut off. It contains the end of Act I scene ii.

Sheets 7 to 16 of the fair copy are white, laid, 7 ¼ x 9 ¾cm, with the watermark of a cherub and ALMASSO / GN. Act II scene i starts at the top of Sheet 7 side 1; Act II scene ii starts at the top of Sheet 8 side 4; Act II scene iii starts halfway down Sheet 12 side 1.

Sheets 17 to 22 of the fair copy are, like sheets 1-6, white, wove, 8 ¼ x 9 ½cm, with the watermark 1808 / J.RUSE / BONDON. They are thus identical with Sheets 9 and 13-21 of the rough draft, and of at least the first sheet of the letter to Murray of January 15th 1817. The first version of Act III scene i starts at the top of Sheet 17 side 1; the first version of Act III scene ii starts at the top of Sheet 20 side 1. After Sheet 21 side 3 is placed the proof of III i ll.1-8; and the first version of Act III scene i ends at the bottom of Sheet 22 side 1.

Three proof pages follow, with the second version of the third act; at the bottom of the third page the Abbot's speech "My Son! ... To higher hope & better thoughts; the first ..." (III i 57-62) is written by Byron.

Sheet 23 is white, wove, 20 x 24.7cm, with no visible watermark. The Abbot's speech begun on the third proof page above is continued by Byron on its first side.

Sheet 24 is also white, wove, 20 x 24.7cm, with watermark a scroll or tendril in the bottom right-hand corner.

Five more proof pages follow, with “Scene 2^d. – Act 3^d. another chamber. – / Manfred and Herman. –” written by Byron at the top of the first.

Sheet 25 is white, wove, 19.7 x 24.7cm, with no visible watermark. Act III scene iv of the new third act begins at the top of its third side.

Sheet 26 is white, wove, 19.7 x 24.7cm, with watermark a scroll or tendril in the bottom right-hand corner.

Sheet 27 is white, wove, 20 x 24.7cm, with no visible watermark.

Sheet 28 is also white, wove, 20 x 24.7cm, with no visible watermark. The play ends on Sheet 28 side 2.

Here is the National Library of Scotland’s description of the fair copy:

Manfred.

Blue binding. Dated by Murray, 18 March 1817. On front free endpaper: ‘Refer to Byron letter to JM, Feb 15 1817, for more on Manfred’ [the 8 holograph pages mentioned by McGann are not bound in and are probably still with this letter]. Catalogued as Byron’s revised fair copy, but resembles a working draft with much revision. The text of *Manfred* in McGann does not replicate the punctuation and capitalisation present in Byron’s MSS.

Contents:

Act I. Printer’s copy. A few revisions in Act I (noted by McGann) and corrections of copying errors. pp.21.

Act II. Printer’s copy. Dated 25 March 1817. Every other leaf numbered, pp.40.

Act III.

Original fair copy version:

Every other leaf numbered, pp.21.

Revised version:

– Proof pages numbered 55-58 (p.58 contains lines 57-62 in Byron’s MS).

– 7 holograph pages, containing III.i.63. to the end of the scene. Numbered 59-60 (every other leaf numbered).

– Proof page of III.ii.1-11, with stage directions written in Byron’s MS at the top of the page: ‘Scene 2nd– Act 3rd, another chamber’

and 'Manfred and Herman'. Stage direction 'Re-enter Herman' is crossed out in ink, with heavy ink scoring on the other side of the page. Pasted down on a sheet numbered 61.

– Proof pages numbered 63-66, containing III.ii.12 to III.iii.47. Various alterations in Byron's MS to the printed text, including addition of 1.47 and stage direction. Five lines have been crossed out on p.66.

– 14 holograph pages, containing III.iii.48 to the end of the act. Numbered 67-70 (every other leaf numbered). Fair copy with one or two corrections.

I, I, 192-261 first published in *The Prisoner of Chillon, and Other Poems* (London, 1816) as 'The Incantation'; first published in full London, 1817; *Coleridge*, IV, 77-136. First performed at Covent Garden, 29 October – 14 November 1834. A transcript in an unidentified hand, as submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for licensing, 30 September 1834, is in the British Library. Add. MS 42927, ff. 786-813.

Manfred was first published, minus line III iv 151 ("Old Man! 'tis not so difficult to die.") on June 16th 1817. Murray's second edition restored the line and was published later in 1817.

The text of this edition

Very little has been written about Byron's accidentals. The editorial consensus hitherto, in so far as one has existed, is that he needs assistance in punctuating, either because he was lazy and incompetent (his own airy version of the problem),⁵ or because he couldn't be bothered, and "left it to the professionals", who duly obliged him with a welter of commas, colons, semi-colons, colon-dashes and semi-colon-dashes, imposing a latinate grammar-school syntax on his natural, dash-driven fluidity of thought. All

5: "If you have patience look it over – do you know any body who can *stop* – I mean *point* – commas & so forth – for I am I fear a sad hand at your punctuation" (BLJ III 100 – refers to *The Giaour*.) "P.S. – Do attend to the punctuation – I cant – for I dont know a comma – at least where to place one" (BLJ III 166 – refers to *The Bride of Abydos*.) "... in particular in correcting the proofs – as the handwriting is very indifferent and it also may want better punctuation" (BLJ IV 34 – refers to the *Ode from the French*, to be printed in the *Morning Post*.) "I restore the proofs – but the *punctuation* should be corrected – I feel too lazy to have at it myself – so beg & pray Mr. Gifford for me" (BLJ IV 234 – refers to *The Lament of Tasso*.)

printed versions, from the first editions via John Wright and E.H. Coleridge down to Jerome J. McGann, have followed the same principle.

Gifford (Byron's "Literary Father") sums up the problem: "Lord B. uses dashes for commas – this gives the work a very singular appearance, & in some places, mars the sense".⁶

However, we should remember what Hazlitt said about Gifford:

... He stands over a contemporary performance with all the self-conceit and self-importance of a country schoolmaster, tries it by technical rules, affects not to understand the meaning, examines the hand-writing, the spelling, shrugs up his shoulders and chuckles over a slip of the pen, and keeps a sharp lookout for a false concord and – a flogging.⁷

As with punctuation, so with capitals. Byron was addicted to his own haphazard version of an eighteenth-century system of capitalisation, which was, among printers of his own day, on the way out.

This edition of *Manfred* retains the accidentals of the original manuscripts. I have followed the punctuation and capitalization of the National Library of Scotland fair copy (except for the I i Incantation, which is from Claire Claremont's copy), with these features:

Ampersands are not expanded

Underlinings are retained and not converted to italics

Byron's favoured "it's" (possessive adjective, not contraction) is retained

The apostrophe is not placed in "e'er" and "o'er"

Byron's favoured double hyphens ("Sea=snake") are retained

Speech-prefixes, about which Byron is inconsistent, are always left-justified, and emboldened

Byron's prose notes are placed within the text, rather than at the end.

Thus, this edition aims to present *Manfred* as it was when it left its author's hand, before anyone else's hand or hands intervened.

6: Gifford to Murray, quoted LJM p.70; writing about *The Corsair*.

7: MR. GIFFORD in *The Spirit of the Age, Works* ed. Waller and Glover IV p.299.

*Manfred a dramatic poem.*⁸

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”⁹

*The scene of the drama is amongst the higher Alps –
partly in the castle of Manfred,
& partly in the mountains.*

Act 1st. scene 1st.

*Manfred*¹⁰ alone – Scene, a Gothic Gallery – time – midnight –

Manfred.

The Lamp must be replenished – but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch,
My Slumbers – if I slumber – are no sleep
But a continuance of enduring thought
Which then I can resist not, – in my heart 5
There is a Vigil – & these eyes but close
To look within, – & yet I live & bear

8: Side 1 is headed “1817 March 18”.

9: Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, V v 166-7. The epigraph is in neither manuscript and was not added until the third issue of the first edition. See B. to Murray, from Venice, April 9th 1817: NLS Ms.43489 f.196; BLJ V 207-9.

10: *Manfred*: the name comes in part from the *Purgatorio* (III 121-4) in part from Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) but in part from *Bertram, or the Castle of St. Aldobrand*, by Charles Maturin (1782-1824) a play which had been mounted on B.’s recommendation, and ran, from May 9 1816, for twenty-two consecutive nights – a great success. Murray printed seven editions in the first year. B. was impressed by the piece (see his letter to Maturin of 21 December 1815, offering to get George Lamb to re-write some unsatisfactory passages – BLJ IV 336) and certainly took note of the name of the protagonist’s hideaway:

... Count Bertram,
Whose vessel had from Manfredonia’s coast
Been traced towards this realm ... (IV i)
On Manfredonia’s wild and wooded shore
His desperate followers awed the regions round ... (IV i)

Bertram (the part was created by Kean) is a gloomy misanthrope, like Manfred, who pursues and destroys the woman he loves; the play is based on a triangular love situation such as B. had exploited in *The Giaour*, *Lara*, and so on.

The aspect & the form of living men,
 But Grief should be the Instructor of the wise,
 Sorrow is knowledge:¹¹ they who know the most 10
 Must mourn the deepest oer the fatal truth,
 The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
 Philosophy & science – & the springs
 Of wonder – & the wisdom of the World
 I have essayed, & in my mind there is 15
 A power to make these subject to itself,
 But they avail not; I have done men good
 And I have met with good even among men –
 But this availed not; I have had my foes
 And none have baffled – many fallen before me 20
 But this availed not: Good – or evil – life –
 Powers – passions – all I see in other beings
 Have been to me as rain unto the sands –
 Since that all nameless hour; I have no dread –
 And feel the curse to have no natural fear,¹² 25
 Nor fluttering throb that beats with hopes or wishes,
 Or lurking love of something on the Earth.
 Now to my task. —
 Mysterious Agency!
 Ye Spirits of the unbounded Universe!¹³
 Whom I have sought in darkness & in light, 30
 Ye! who do compass earth about – & dwell
 In subtler essence – Ye to whom the tops
 Of mountains inaccessible¹⁴ are haunts
 And Earth's & Ocean's caves familiar things,
 I call upon ye by the written charm 35
 Which gives me power upon you¹⁵ – Rise! – Appear!

11: *Sorrow is knowledge:* see *Ecclesiastes* I, 18: *For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

12: *And feel the curse to have no natural fear:* compare *Macbeth* at V v 9: *I have almost forgot the taste of fear.*

13: Both Mss. have “Eternal Agency! / Ye Spirits of the immortal universe!” Changed in proof.

14: Both Mss. have “inaccessible mountains”. Changed in proof.

15: *I call upon you – by the written charm / Which gives me power upon you:* what the charm is we are not told; but compare *Faustus* at I iii 8-9:

*Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
 Forward and backward anagrammatised:*

(a pause)

They come not yet. – Now by the voice of him
Who is the first among you,¹⁶ – by this sign
Which makes you tremble, by the claims of him
Who is undying¹⁷ – Rise – Appear – Appear — 40

(a pause)

If it be so. – Spirits of earth & air
Ye shall not now elude me – by a power
Deeper than all yet urged – a tyrant=spell
Which had it's birthplace in a star condemned¹⁸ –
The burning wreck of a demolished world 45
A wandering Hell in the eternal Space,
By the strong curse which is upon my Soul¹⁹
The thought which is within me and around me –
I do compel you to my will. – Appear! –

(A Star is seen at the darker end of the Gallery:
It is stationary – & a voice is heard singing. –)

1st. Spirit.

Mortal! to thy bidding bowed 50
From my mansion in the cloud
Which the breath of Twilight builds
And the Summer's Sunset gilds
With the azure & vermilion
Which is mixed for my pavilion²⁰ – 55

*The abbreviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,
And characters of signs and evening stars,
By which the spirits are enforced to rise.*

16: ... *the voice of him / Who is the first among you:* that is, Manfred's voice.

17: ... *the claims of him / Who is undying:* the highest power, the creator, the Demiurgus, the over-ruling infinite to whom Manfred refers below at II iv 47.

18: ... *a tyrant's spell / Which had its birthplace in a Star condemned:* perhaps the tyrant is Manfred himself, born under a wandering star, as we learn below, this scene, ll.110-24. Compare *Hamlet*, V i 247-9: *What is he ... whose phrase of sorrow conjures the wandering stars?*

19: *By the strong curse which is upon my Soul:* compare *CHP* I, 83, 8-9: ... *life-abhorring gloom / Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain's unresting doom.*

Though thy quest may be forbidden
 On a starbeam I have ridden
 To thine adjuration bowed,
 Mortal! be thy wish avowed!

Voice of the 2nd. Spirit²¹

Mont Blanc is the Monarch of mountains, ²²	60
They crowned him long ago,	
On a throne of rocks – in a robe of clouds	
With a Diadem of Snow.	
Around his waist are forests braced	
The Avalanche in his hand,	65
But ere it fall – that thundering ball	
Must pause for my command. ²³	
The Glacier's cold & restless mass	
Moves onward day by day	
But I am he who bids it pass	70
Or with ²⁴ it's ice delay.	
I am the Spirit of the place	
Could make the mountain bow	
And quiver to his caverned base	
And what with me would'st <u>Thou</u> ?	75

20: Both Mss. have “fit for my pavilion”. Changed in proof. B. re-uses the *vermilion / pavilion* rhyme at *Don Juan* II 731-3.

21: This may interestingly be compared with Shelley's more extended Platonic meditation *Mont Blanc*, written in July 1816, when Shelley was in B.'s company.

22: ALPINE JOURNAL: B. wrote to Murray, from Venice, October 12 1817, after the completion not only of *Manfred* but of *CHP* IV and *Beppo*: ... *as to the germs of Manfred – they may be found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs. Leigh (part of which you saw) when I went over first the Dent de Jamant & then the Wengeren or Wengeberg Alp & Sheideck and made the giro of the Jungfrau Schreckhorn &c. &c. shortly before I left Switzerland – I have the whole scene of Manfred before me as if it was but yesterday – & could point it out spot by spot, torrent and all* (BLJ V 268). The relevant parts of the Journal will be printed in the appropriate places.

23: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 23: ... *heard the Avalanches falling every five minutes nearly – as if God was pelting the Devil down from Heaven with snowballs ... I made a snowball & pelted H[obhouse] with it ...* (BLJ V 101-2).

24: Both Mss. have “makes”. Changed in proof.

(3rd. Spirit's voice)

In the blue depth of the waters
 Where the Wave hath no strife –
 Where the Wind is a stranger,
 And the Sea=Snake hath life,
 Where the Mermaid is decking 80
 Her green hair with shells
 Like the Storm on the Surface
 Came the sound of thy spells,
 Oer my calm hall of Coral
 The deep Echo rolled, 85
 To the Spirit of Ocean
 Thy wishes unfold!

(4th. Spirit. –)

Where the slumbering Earthquake
 Lies pillowed on fire
 And the lakes of bitumen 90
 Rise boilingly higher, –
 Where the roots of the Andes
 Strike deep in the earth,
 As their Summits to heaven
 Shoot soaringly forth, 95
 I have quitted my birthplace
 Thy bidding to bide –
 Thy Spell hath subdued me,
 Thy will be my Guide! –

(5th. Spirit)

I am the Rider of the Wind,²⁵ 100
 The Stirrer of the storm,
 The hurricane I left behind
 Is yet with lightning warm,
 To speed to thee – oer shore & sea
 I swept upon the blast, 105
 The fleet I met – sailed well & yet
 'Twill sink ere Night be past.

25: *I am the Rider of the Wind:* compare Job 30, 22-3: *Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*

(6th. Spirit)

My dwelling is the Shadow of the Night,
Why doth thy Magic torture me with Light?

(7th. Spirit)²⁶

The Star, which rules thy destiny,	110
Was ruled, ere Earth begun, by me,	
It was a World as fresh & fair	
As eer revolved round Sun in air,	
It's course was free & regular	
Space bosomed not a lovelier star. –	115
The Hour arrived – & it became	
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,	
A pathless Comet & a Curse	
The Menace of the Universe,	
Still rolling on with innate force,	120
Without a sphere – without a course,	
A bright deformity on high	
The monster of the upper sky! –	
And Thou – beneath it's influence born	
Thou Worm! whom I obey & scorn	125
Forced by a power (which is not thine	
And lent thee but to make thee mine)	
For this brief moment to descend	
Where these weak Spirits round thee bend,	
And parley with a thing like thee –	130
What would'st thou, Child of Clay! with me?	

(the Seven Spirits)

Earth – ocean – air – night – mountains – winds – thy Star,
Are at thy beck & bidding Child of Clay!
Before thee at thy quest their Spirits are,

26: Is adapted to an ottava rima idiom at *TVoJ*, st.2:

*The Angels all were singing out of tune
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the Sun and Moon,
Or curb a runaway young Star or two,
Or wild Colt of a Comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er the ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail –
As boats are sometimes by a wanton Whale. –*

What would'st thou with us – Son of mortals – Say? 135

Manfred

Forgetfulness. ———

1st. Spirit

Of what – of whom – & why?

Manfred

Of that which is within me – read it there

Ye know it – & I cannot utter it. –

Spirit

We can but give thee that which we possess,

Ask of us – subjects – sovereignty – the power 140

O'er earth – the whole, or portion – or a sign

Which shall controul the elements, whereof

We are the dominators each & all –

These shall be thine.

Manfred

Oblivion – self=oblivion –

Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms, 145

Ye offer so profusely, – what I ask?

Spirit

It is not in our essence – in our skill

But – thou may'st die.

Manfred

Will death bestow it on me?

Spirit

We are immortal, & do not forget,

We are eternal – & to us the past 150

Is as the future – present, art thou answered?

Manfred

Ye mock me – but the power which brought ye here

Hath made you mine. Slaves – scoff not at my will!

The Mind, – the Spirit, – the Promethean Spark –

The Lightning of my being is as bright 155
 Pervading – & far=darting as your own,
 And shall not yield to yours – though cooped in clay,
 Answer – or I will teach ye – what I am.

Spirit

We answer – as we are answered – our reply
 Is even in thine own words.

Manfred

Why say ye so? 160

Spirit

If as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
 We have replied in telling thee the thing
 Mortals call death – hath nought to do with us.

Manfred

I then have called ye from your realms in vain
 Ye cannot – or ye will not aid me.

Spirit

Say – 165
 What we possess we offer – it is thine
 Bethink ere thou dismiss us – ask again,
 Kingdom & sway – & strength & length of days.²⁷ –

Manfred

Accursed – What have I to do with days? –
 They are too long already – hence – begone. – 170

Spirit

Yet pause – being here – our will would do thee service –
 Bethink thee is there then no other gift –
 Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?

27: ... ask again, / Kingdom – and sway – and strength – and length of days: one of the temptations which assail Christ in the wilderness (*Matthew* 4, 8-10) and are too powerful for both Faustus and Faust.

Manfred

No – none – yet stay – one moment ere we part –
I would behold ye face to face – I hear 175
Your voices sweet & melancholy sounds
As Music on the waters²⁸ – & I see
The steady aspect of a clear large Star
But nothing more – approach me as ye are,
Or one – or all – in your accustomed forms. 180

Spirit

We have no forms beyond the elements
Of which we are the Mind & Principle
But chuse a form in that we will appear.

Manfred

I have no choice there is no form on earth
Hideous or beautiful to me – let him – 185
Who is most powerful of ye – take such aspect
As unto him may seem most fitting – Come!

7th. Spirit

(Appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure)
Behold!

Manfred

Oh God! if it be thus – & thou –
Art not a madness & a mockery
I yet might be most happy – I will clasp thee 190
And we again will be –

(The figure vanishes)

My heart is crushed!

(Manfred falls senseless)²⁹

28: *Your voices – sweet and melancholy sounds / As Music on the waters:* compare *Stanzas to Music*, 3-4: *And like music on the waters / Is thy sweet voice to me.*

29: Iamblichus, the neo-Platonist philosopher to whom B. refers below, at II ii 92-4 and n, says this about human reaction to divine apparitions: *The gods when they appear, diffuse a light of so subtle a nature, that the corporeal eyes are not able to bear it; but are affected in the same manner as fishes when they are drawn out of*

(A Voice is heard in the Incantation which follows
 “When the Moon is on the Wave” &c. &c. &c. &c.)³⁰

1
 When the Moon is on the wave,
 And the Glowworm in the grass, –
 And the Meteor on the grave,
 And the Wisp on the Morass; 195
 When the falling stars are shooting,
 And the answered Owls are hooting,
 And the silent leaves are still
 In the shadow of the hill,
 Shall my Soul be upon thine, 200
 With a power, and with a sign.

2
 Though thy Slumber may be deep
 Yet thy Spirit shall not sleep,
 There are shades which will not vanish,
 There are thoughts thou cans't not banish, 205
 By a Power to thee unknown
 Thou can'st never be Alone,
 Thou art wrapt as with a Shroud,
 Thou art gathered in a cloud,
 And forever shalt thou dwell 210
 In the spirit of this spell.

*turbid and thick water into attentuated and diaphanous air. For men who behold a divine fire, as soon as they perceive it are scarcely able to breathe, and their connate spirit becomes inclosed in the fire. – De Mysteriis, p.70, quoted Taylor's Pausanias, III 361-2. Two earlier encounters with spectral women in B.'s poems are at *The Giaour*, 1285-95; and *The Siege of Corinth*, Parts 20-1: and the situation is cunningly inverted in the last stanzas of *Don Juan* Canto XVI.*

30: Lines 192-261 are not in either Ms. In the fair copy, B. writes, “N.B. here follows the “Incantation” which being already transcribed & (I suppose) published I do not transcribe again at present because you can insert it in M.S. here – as it belongs to this place: – with it's conclusion the 1st scene closes. –” The lines were published in December 1816, with *The Prisoner of Chillon*, with the note “The following Poem was a Chorus in an unfinished Witch Drama – which was begun some years ago”.

3.
Though thou see'st me not pass by
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee & hath been, 215
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turned around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the Spot,
And the power which thou dost feel 220
Shall be what thou must conceal.

4.
And a magic Voice and Verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse,
And a Spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare, 225
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice,
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky,
And the day shall have a Sun, 230
Which shall make thee wish it done.

5.³¹
From thy false tears I did distill
An essence which hath strength to kill,
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in it's blackest Spring, 235
From thy own smile I snatched the Snake
For there it coiled as in a brake,
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm,
In proving every poison known 240
I found the strongest was thine own.

31: See notes below for the relationship between sts.5 and 6 of the Incantation and Coleridge's *Christabel*. However, in terms of rhymes, octosyllabic rhythm and mood the passage owes much also to such sequences as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* II ii 27-4, and *Macbeth* IV i 1-36.

6.
 By thy cold breast – and serpent smile,
 By thy unfathomed gulphs of Guile,
 By that most seeming virtuous eye,³²
 By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy, 245
 By the perfection of thine art
 Which passed for human – thine own heart,
 By thy delight in others' pain,
 And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
 I call upon thee! – and compell 250
 Thyself to be thy proper Hell!³³
- 7.³⁴
 And on thy head I pour the vial
 Which doth devote thee to this trial,
 Nor to slumber – nor to die
 Shall be in thy destiny, 255
 Though thy death shall still seem near
 To thy wish, but as a fear,³⁵

32: Echoes the Ghost's words about Gertrude at *Hamlet*, I v 46: ... *my most seeming-virtuous queen*; however, all of sts.5 and 6 of the Incantation bear a more than usually close relationship, in their preoccupation with serpentine hypocrisy, to the figure of Geraldine in Coleridge's unfinished *Christabel* – some stanzas of which B. had heard Scott recite in the spring of 1815 (BLJ IV 318) and which had been published by Murray, at B.'s insistence – in April 1816 (BLJ IV 321, 331). B. had already drawn public attention to his borrowing from the poem in a note to l.476 of *The Siege of Corinth*, published on February 13 1816 (CPW III 486). He quotes (covertly) from *Christabel* in a letter to Moore of January 5 1816 (BLJ V 15); recites its opening and others parts to Shelley and his other Geneva friends on June 18 1816 (LJ IV 296n, Polidori's Diary p.128); defends it to Murray on September 30 1816 (BLJ V 108); and by March 25 1817 – after the completion of the first version of *Manfred* – is joking about it (BLJ V 187 and 193).

33: The rough draft has "I do adjure thee to this spell / To be thyself thy proper hell".

34: In the rough draft, stanza 7 seems to come before stanzas 5 and 6; though B. may just have started on the wrong side of the sheet (side 3 instead of side 4). "End of Scene 1st." is correctly placed, after stanza 7.

35: Echoes Southey's *The Curse of Kehama*:

*And thou shalt seek Death
 To release thee, in vain;
 Thou shalt live in thy pain
 While Kehama shall reign,
 With a fire in thy heart,*

Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee,³⁶
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the Word been passed, – now Wither!³⁷ 260

End of Scene 1st.

*And a fire in thy brain;
And Sleep shall obey me,
And visit thee never,
And the Curse shall be on thee
For ever and ever.*

See also below, II ii 136 *et. seq.*

36: Complements *The Prisoner of Chillon*, 98: *His spirit withered with their clank.*

37: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 23: *Passed whole woods of withered pines – all withered – trunks stripped & barkless – branches lifeless – done by a single winter – their appearance reminded me of me & my family.* (BLJ V 102) See also Antony at *Antony and Cleopatra* IV xii 23-4: *... and this pine is barked / That overtopped them all*; also Cleopatra at IV xv 64: *O, withered is the garland of the war ...*

Act I, scene ii.

(Scene 2^d. – The Mountain of the Jungfrau – time – Morning. –
Manfred alone on the cliffs)

Manfred

The Spirits I have raised abandon me –
The spells which I have studied baffle me –
The remedy I recked of tortured me.
I lean no more on Superhuman aid
It hath no power upon the past and for 5
The future, till the past be gulphed in darkness
It is not of my search. – My Mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day! & you ye Mountains!
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou the bright Eye of the Universe 10
That openest over all – & unto all
Art a delight – thou shin'st not on my heart.³⁸
And you ye Craggs! upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrents' brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs 15
In dizziness of distance³⁹ – when a leap –
A stir – a motion – even a breath – would bring
My breast upon it's rocky bosom's bed
To rest forever – wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse – yet I do not plunge – 20
I see the peril – yet do not recede –
And my brain reels – & yet my foot is firm;
There is a power upon me which witholds
And makes it my fatality to live,⁴⁰

38: *And thou – the bright Eye of the Universe! / That openest over all – and unto all / Art a delight; – thou shinest not on my heart:* yet see below, III ii 1-29. Evidently something occurs between now and then to render Manfred more open to the benign influence of the sun.

39: Echoes the speech of Edgar at *King Lear* IV vi 11-24:

How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles ...
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock ...

If it be life to wear within myself 25
 This barrenness of Spirit – & to be
 My own Soul's Sepulchre; – ⁴¹ for I have ceased
 To justify my deeds unto myself,
 The last infirmity of evil. ⁴² –

(An Eagle passes.)

Aye

Thou winged & cloud-cleaving Minister! 30
 Whose happy flight is highest into heaven
 Well may'st thou swoop so near me – I should be
 Thy prey & gorge thine Eaglets; thou art gone
 Where the eye cannot follow thee but thine
 Yet pierces downward – onward – or above 35
 With a pervading vision: ⁴³ – beautiful –
 How beautiful is all this visible World! ⁴⁴

40: Echoes Othello's words to Iago at V ii 92-3:

I'd have thee live;

For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.

41: *My own Soul's Sepulchre*: echoes Thomas Taylor's *On the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (1816) p.37: *Plato, too, it is well known, considered the body as the sepulchre of the soul ...*

42: Echoes Milton, *Lycidas*, 70-2:

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise

(That last infirmity of Noble mind)

To scorn delights, and live laborious days ...

43: A very rare example of Byron using a colon.

44: Compare the Poet's address to the swan in Shelley's *Alastor*, 280-91:

"Thou hast a home,

Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,

Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck

With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes

Bright in the lustre of her own fond joy.

And what am I that I should linger here,

With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,

Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned

To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers

In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven

That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile

Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.

How glorious in it's action & itself,⁴⁵
 But we, who name ourselves it's sovereigns – we
 Half dust, half deity, alike unfit 40
 To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
 A conflict of it's elements – and breathe
 The breath of degradation & of pride
 Contending with low wants & lofty will
 Till our Mortality predominates, 45
 And men are – what they name not to themselves
 And trust not to each other.

(The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.)

Hark! the note
 The natural music of the mountain reed
 For here the patriarchal days are not
 A pastoral fable – pipes in the liberal air 50
 Mixed with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd,⁴⁶
 My Soul would drink those echoes – Oh, that I were
 The viewless Spirit of a lovely sound –
 A living voice – a breathing harmony –
 A bodiless enjoyment – born & dying 55
 With the blest tone which made me!

By contrast, Manfred feels himself altogether inferior to the eagle. In *Prometheus Bound* the protagonist is warned that he will become the prey of eagles: Manfred would welcome the idea.

45: This section echoes *Hamlet*, *What a piece of work is a man ...* (II ii 292 *et seq.*).

46: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 19: *The whole of the Mountain superb – the shepherd upon a very steep & high cliff playing upon his pipe – very different from Arcadia – (where I saw the pastors with with a long Musquet instead of a Crook – and pistols in their Girdles) – our Swiss Shepherd's pipe was sweet – & his time agreeable – saw a cow strayed – told that the often break their necks on & over the crags ... the music of the Cows' bells (for their wealth like the Patriarchs is cattle) in the pastures (which reach to a height far above any mountains in Britain –) and the Shepherds' shouting to us from crag to crag & playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery – realized all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence – much more so than Greece or Asia Minor – for there we are a little too much of the sabre & musquet order – and if there is a Crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other – but this was pure and unmixed – solitary – savage and patriarchal ...* (BLJ V 99)

(Enter from below a Chamois=Hunter)

Chamois=Hunter

Even so
This way the Chamois leapt – her nimble feet
Have baffled me – my gains today will scarce
Repay my breakneck travail – what is here?
Who seems not of my trade – & yet hath reached 60
A height which none even of our Mountaineers
Save our best hunters may attain: his garb
Is goodly – his mien manly – & his air
Proud as a freeborn peasant's, at this distance –
I will approach him nearer.

Manfred (not perceiving the other)

To be thus – 65
Grey-haired with anguish – like these blasted pines
Wrecks of a single winter – barkless – branchless
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root
Which but supplies a feeling to Decay,
And to be thus – eternally but thus, 70
Having been otherwise – now furrowed oer
With wrinkles ploughed by moments not by years
And hours – all tortured into ages – hours
Which I outlive! – ye toppling crags of Ice!⁴⁷
Ye Avalanches whom a breath draws down 75
In mountainous oerwhelming – come & crush me!⁴⁸
I hear ye momentarily above – beneath –

47: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 23: *Passed whole woods of withered pines – all withered – trunks stripped & barkless – branches lifeless – done by a single winter – their appearance reminded me of me & my family.* (BLJ V 102). See also Shelley's *Alastor*, ll.530-2:

... nought but knarled roots of antient pines
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly.

... also Antony at *Antony and Cleopatra* IV xii 23-4: ... *and this pine is barked / That overtopped them all*; and Cleopatra at IV xv 64: *O, withered is the garland of the war ...*

48: Recalls *Doctor Faustus* V ii 163-4:

*Mountains and hills come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God.*

Crash with a frequent conflict – but ye pass
 And only fall on things which still would live
 On the young flourishing forest – or the hut –
 And hamlet of the harmless villager. 80

Chamois Hunter

The Mists begin to rise from up the valley,
 I'll warn him to descend – or he may chance
 To lose his way & life together.

Manfred

The Mists boil up around the Glaciers, Clouds⁴⁹
 Rise curling fast beneath me – white & sulphury
 Like foam from the roused Ocean of deep Hell,⁵⁰
 Whose every wave breaks on a living shore
 Heaped with the damned like pebbles. – I am giddy. 85

Chamois Hunter

I must approach him cautiously – if near
 A sudden step will startle him – & he
 Seems tottering already.⁵¹ 90

49: Echoes the entry for September 23: *on the other [side] the clouds rose from the opposite valley curling up perpendicular precipices – like the foam of the the Ocean of Hell during a Springtide – it was white & sulphery – and immeasurably deep in appearance ...* (BLJ V 102). See also a letter to Murray of September 29: *we have ... looked on the clouds foaming up from the valleys below us – like the spray from the ocean of hell ...* (BLJ V 106). See also Shakespeare, Sonnet 60, ll.1-2:

*Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end ...*

50: The rough draft and fair copy both have “old Hell”.

51: For Manfred's encounter with the Chamois Hunter, compare Shelley's *Alastor*, ll.257-62:

*The mountaineer,
 Encountering on some dizzy precipice
 That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind
 With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
 Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
 In its career ...*

B.'s mountaineer is guilty of no such misapprehension.

Manfred

Mountains have fallen
Leaving a gap in the clouds, & with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren – filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters, 95
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash
That crushed the waters into mist & made
Their fountains find another channel, thus,
Thus in it's old age, did Mount Rosenberg⁵² –
Why stood I not beneath it?

Chamois Hunter

Friend – have a care – 100
Your next step may be fatal – for the love
Of him who made you⁵³ stand not on that brink! –

Manfred (not hearing him)

Such would have been for me a fitting tomb –
My bones had then been quiet in their depth
They had not been strewn upon the rocks 105
For the wind's pastime – as thus – thus – they shall be
In this one plunge: – Farewell, ye opening Heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully,
Ye were not meant for me: –⁵⁴ Earth! Take these atoms!

52: Mount Rosenberg: in fact, Rossberg. On September 2nd 1806 a huge fragment of the mountain, which is near Goldau, slid into the valley below, overwhelming four villages and killing four hundred and fifty people. Hobhouse's diary for August 21 1816, made while he and Scrope Davies were travelling through Switzerland to join B. at Diodati, reads *Up at seven. Better – breakfasted at the Stag, which is a very good inn, and where we heard the landlady relate the story of the falling of the Rossberg mountain at Goldau, when she had a party that left her thirteen in the morning and came back six, the rest being killed, and naively related the saying of a gentleman who escaped – a Mr. Schmidt: "Je ne serai pas tranquille avant de quitter la Suisse – dont les montagnes décroulent comme ça!"* or some such words, which he kept good by leaving the country instantly. A woman who escaped, though she was for a short time buried, thought the day of judgement was come. Nearly two villages were overwhelmed. General Pfiffer, the [] topographer of this part of the country, who died in 1800 at his house in Zurich, foretold from a view of the strata that such a catastrophe was probable. – B.L.Add. Mss. 56536, 81r.-v.

53: ...for the love / Of him who made you: the voice of orthodox Christianity heard for the first time in the play.

(As Manfred is in act to spring from the cliff, the Chamois=Hunter seizes & retains him with a sudden grasp)

Chamois Hunter

Hold Madman! though aweary of thy life 110
 Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood –
 Away with me – I will not quit my hold!

Manfred

I am most sick at heart⁵⁵ – nay – grasp me not –
 I am all feebleness – the Mountains whirl
 Spinning around me – I grow blind – what art thou? 115

Chamois Hunter

I'll answer that anon – away with me –
 The clouds grow thicker – there – now lean on me –
 Place your foot here – here – take this staff & cling
 A moment to that Shrub – now – give me your hand –
 And hold fast by my Girdle – softly – well – 120
 The Chalet will be gained within an hour –
 Come on – we'll quickly find a surer footing
 And something like a pathway – which the torrent
 Hath washed since winter – Come – 'tis bravely done –
 You should have been a Hunter – follow me. 125

(As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the Scene closes.
 End of Act the first.)

54: *Farewell, ye opening heavens – / Look not upon me thus reproachfully – ye were not meant for me ...* find themselves inverted in the death of the eldest son of the old Tartar Khan, at *Don Juan* VIII, st.115:

*So fully flashed the phantom on his eyes,
 That when the very lance was in his heart
 He shouted "Allah!" and saw Paradise
 With all its veil of mystery drawn apart –
 And bright Eternity without disguise
 On his soul, like a ceaseless Sunrise, dart –
 With Prophets – Houris – Angels – Saints – descried
 In one voluptuous blaze – and then he died ...*

55: Echoes Macbeth's *I am sick at heart* at V iii 20.

Act II scene i.⁵⁶

(Act 2^d scene first. – a cottage amongst the Bernese Alps –
Manfred & the Chamois Hunter)

Chamois Hunter

No – no – yet pause – thou must not yet go forth
Thy mind & body are alike unfit
To trust each other – for some hours at least
When thou art better I will be thy guide –
But whither?

5

Manfred

It imports not – I do know
My route full well – & need no further guidance.⁵⁷ –

Chamois Hunter

Thy garb & gait bespeak thee of high lineage⁵⁸ –
One of the many chiefs – whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys⁵⁹ – which of these
May call thee Lord? I only know their portals –
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls
Carousing with the vassals – but the paths
Which step from out our mountains to their doors
I know from childhood – which of these is thine? –

10

15

Manfred

No matter. — — —

Chamois Hunter

Well Sir! – pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer – come – taste my wine –
'Tis of an ancient vintage – many a day

56: The fair copy has “1817 / Mar 25”.

57: Echoes the words of Gloucester at *King Lear* IV i 78-9: *From that place / I shall no leading need.*

58: Both manuscripts have “high race”.

59: *One of the many chiefs – whose castled crags / Look o'er the lower valleys:* recalls *CHP* III, sts.46-9, and the lyric *The castled crag of Drachenfels* between sts.55 and 56. The poem was written earlier in 1816.

T'has thawed my veins among our Glaciers – now –
 Let it do thus for thine – come – pledge me fairly! – 20

Manfred

Away – Away – there's blood upon the brim –
 Will it then never – never – sink in the earth?⁶⁰

Chamois Hunter

What dost thou mean? Thy senses wander from thee? –

Manfred

I say 'tis blood – my blood – the pure warm stream
 Which ran in the veins of my fathers and in ours 25
 When we were in our youth & had one heart
 And loved each other as we should not love
 And this was shed – but still it rises up
 Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven⁶¹
 Where thou art not – and I shall never be.⁶² – 30

Chamois Hunter

Man of strange words – & some half-maddening sin
 That makes thee people vacancy⁶³ – whate'er
 Thy dread & sufferance be – there's comfort yet⁶⁴ –

60: *Away – Away – there's blood upon the brim – / Will it then never – never – sink in the earth:* echoes Lady Macbeth in V i.

61: *... still it rises up / Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven:* compare Faustus at V ii 156-7: *See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! One drop of it would save my soul – half a drop!*

62: *... heaven, / Where thou art not – and I shall never be:* the addressee is clearly not the Chamois Hunter; Manfred may be addressing the absent Astarte, who would thus seem not, in her brother's opinion, to be among the blessed. However, Chew (p.70) wonders if this and other lines form a riddle indicating that Astarte is not dead; in which case we must perhaps read an understood "yet" between not and and. Either that, or Astarte's soul, thanks to her union with Manfred, has been extinguished in the "death more durable and profound" which Thomas Taylor asserts will be the lot of "souls in a state of impurity". See also II ii 198-9, II iv 83, and nn.

63: *some half-maddening sin / That makes thee people vacancy:* echoes Gertrude's words to *Hamlet* at III iv 116-18:

*Alas, how is 't with you,
 That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
 And with th'incorporeal air do hold discourse?*

The aid of holy men – & heavenly patience –

Manfred

Patience – and patience – hence – that word was made 35
For brutes of burthen – not for birds of prey –⁶⁵
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine
I am not of thine order.⁶⁶

Chamois Hunter

Thanks to heaven –
I would not be of thine – for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoever thine ill – 40
It must be borne – and these wild starts are useless.⁶⁷

Manfred

Do I not bear it? – look on me – I live. –

Chamois Hunter

This is convulsion and no healthful life. –

Manfred

I tell thee – Man! – I have lived many years –
Many long years – but they are nothing now 45
To those which I must number – ages – ages –
Space & eternity – & consciousness –
With the fierce thirst of death – and still unslaked. – –

Chamois Hunter

Why on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set – I am thy elder far. – 50

64: Echoes *Macbeth* III ii 39: “There’s comfort yet – they are assailable ...”

65: *Patience – and Patience – hence – that word was made / For brutes of burthen not for birds of prey*: compare *Faust*, Scene IV, 1605-6: *Fluch sei der Hoffnung! Fluch dem Glauben, / Und Fluch vor allen der Geduld!* See also Antony and Cleopatra, IV xv, 79-80: *Patience is sottish, and impatience does / Become a dog that’s mad.*

66: Recalls (perhaps inadvertently) the words of Malvolio to Maria, Sir Toby and Fabian at *Twelfth Night* III iv 118-19: *You are idle shallow things: I am not of your element.*

67: Echoes the words of Lady Macbeth to Macbeth at III iv: *O, these flaws and starts – / Impostors to true fear ...*

Manfred

Thinks't thou existence doth depend on time?
 It doth – but actions are our epochs – mine
 Have made my days and nights imperishable⁶⁸ –
 Endless & all alike as sands on the shore
 Innumerable atoms – & one desert – 55
 Barren & cold – on which the wild waves break
 But nothing rests save carcasses & wrecks –
 Rocks and the salt=surf weeds of bitterness.⁶⁹ –

Chamois Hunter

Alas! He's mad – but yet I must not leave him.⁷⁰ –

Manfred

I would I were – for then the things I see 60
 Would be but a distempered dream.

Chamois Hunter

What is it?

That thou dost see – or think thou looks't upon?

Manfred

Myself and thee – a Peasant of the Alps –
 Thy humble virtues – hospitable home –
 And Spirit patient pious, proud, and free, – 65
 Thy self respect, grafted on innocent thoughts
 Thy days of health, & nights of sleep – thy toils

68: *Thinks't thou existence doth depend on time? – / It doth – but actions are our epochs:* echoes *Childe Harold* III, 5, 1-2:

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,

In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of night ...

69: Anticipates the description of Sathan at st.24 of *The Vision of Judgement*:

But bringing up the rear of this bright host

A Spirit of a different aspect waved

His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast

Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved –

His brow was like the Deep when tempest-tost –

Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved

Eternal wrath on his immortal face –

And where he gazed a gloom pervaded Space.

See also *Don Juan* II st.177.

70: *Alas, he's mad:* the words of Gertrude at *Hamlet*, III iv 105.

By danger dignified – yet guiltless – hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave
With cross & garland over it's green turf 70
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph⁷¹ –
This do I see – and then I look within
It matters not – my Soul was scorched already.

Chamois Hunter

And wouldst thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

Manfred

No – friend! – I would not wrong thee, nor exchange 75
My lot with living being – I can bear –
However wretchedly – 'tis still to bear –
In life what others could not brook to dream –
But perish in their slumber.

Chamois Hunter

And with this –
This cautious feeling for another's pain – 80
Can'st thou be black with evil? say not so –
Can one of gentle thoughts have wreaked revenge
Upon his enemies?

Manfred

Oh – no – no – no –
My injuries came down on those who loved me
On those whom I best loved – I never quelled 85
An enemy, but in my just defence –
My wrongs were all on those I should have cherished,⁷²
But my embrace was fatal.⁷³ – –

71: Echoes Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, sts.6-9.

72: This line is in the rough draft but not in the fair copy. B. may have felt it superfluous. See Gordon Spence, *The Supernatural in Manfred* (BJ 2004 1 p.8) for the argument that the line *is* superfluous, and that if it is included it makes no sense unless “But” at the start of the next line is replaced by “And”.

73: B. implies his own destructive behaviour towards his own home, marriage and family: “The nightmare of my own delinquencies” (BLJ V 165). Broken pentameter indicates that Manfred pauses.

Chamois Hunter

Heaven give thee rest!
And Penitence restore thee to thyself –
My prayers shall be for thee –

Manfred

I need them not –	90
But can endure thy pity. – I depart –	
'Tis time – farewell – here's gold – & thanks – for thee –	
No words – it is thy due – follow me not –	
I know my path – the mountain peril's past –	
And once again – I charge thee – follow not.	95

(Exit Manfred)

End of scene first. –

Act II scene ii.

Scene second Act 2^d

A Lower valley in the Alps – a cataract. –

Enter Manfred

It is not noon – the Sunbow's rays still arch +
The torrent with the many hues of heaven
And rolls the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular –
And flings it's lines of foaming light along 5
And to & fro – like the pale courser's tail
The Giant steed to be bestrode by Death
As told in the Apocalypse. – ⁷⁴ no eyes

+ Note) This Iris is formed by the rays of the Sun over the lower part of the Alpine torrents – it is exactly like a rainbow – come down to pay a visit – and so close that you may walk into it – this effect lasts till Noon. – – – –

But mine now drink this sight of loveliness –
I should be sole in this sweet solitude, 10
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters. ⁷⁵ – I will call her. –

74: like the pale courser's tail / The giant steed to be bestrode by Death / As told in the Apocalypse: see Revelation 6, 8: And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

75: ALPINE JOURNAL: the lines, and the scene which follow, echo the entries for September 22 and 23, when B. and Hobhouse lodged opposite the Staubbach waterfall, near Lauterbrunnen: ... Arrived at the foot of the Mountain (the Yung-frau – i.e. the Maiden) Glaciers – torrents – one of these torrents nine hundred feet in height of visible descent – lodge at the Curate's ... very good indeed – much better than most English Vicarages – it is immediately opposite the torrent I spoke of – the torrent is in shape curving over the rock – like the tail of a white horse streaming in the wind – such as it might be conceived might be that of the "pale horse" on which Death is mounted in the Apocalypse. It is neither mist nor water but a something between both – it's immense height (nine hundred feet) gives it a wave – a curve – a spreading here – a condensation there – wonderful – & indescribable. – / *Septr. 23d.* / Before ascending the mountain – went to the torrent (7 in the morning) again – the Sun upon it forming a rainbow of the lower part of

(Manfred takes some of the water in the palm of his hand & flings it in to the air muttering the adjuration.⁷⁶ – After a pause the Witch of the Alps rises beneath the arch of the Sunbow of the torrent)

Manfred

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light –
 And dazzling eyes of Glory, – in whose form
 The charms of Earth's least=mortal daughters grow 15
 To an unearthly stature in an essence
 Of purer elements – while the hues of Youth –
 Carnationed like a sleeping infant's cheek
 Rocked by the beating of her mother's heart,
 Or the rosetints which Summer's twilight leaves 20
 Upon the lofty Glacier's virgin snow –
 The blush of Earth when mingling with her heaven, –
 Tinge thy celestial aspect, & make tame
 The beauties of the Sunbow which bends o'er thee.
 Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow 25
 Wherein is glassed Serenity of Soul –
 Which of itself shows immortality,
 I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
 Of Earth whom the abstruser powers permit
 At times to commune with them – if that he 30
 Avail him of his spells – to call thee thus
 And gaze on thee a moment. –

Witch of the Alps

Son of Earth!

I know thee – and the powers which give thee power –

all colours – but principally purple and gold – the bow moving as you move – I never saw anything like this – it is only in the Sunshine. – (BLJ V 101)

76: Manfred's ritual action may have been suggested by the following note to Thomas Taylor's Pausanias: ... *the oracle in Colophon gives its answers through the medium of water: for there is a fountain in a subterranean dwelling, from which the prophetess drinks; and on certain established nights, after many sacred rites have been previously performed, and she has drunk of the fountain, she delivers oracles, but is not visible to those that are present ... the water itself ... prepares us, and purifies our luciform spirit, so that we may be able to receive the divinity; while in the mean time there is a presence of divinity prior to this, and illuminating from on high* – (Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, p.72ff, quoted Taylor's Pausanias III 353).

I know thee for a man of many thoughts
And deeds of good and ill – extreme in both – 35
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings. –
I have expected this. – what would'st thou with me?

Manfred

To look upon thy beauty – nothing further –
The face of the earth hath maddened me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries – and pierce 40
To the abodes of those who govern her:
But they can nothing aid me – I have sought
From them what they could not bestow – & now
I search no further. – – – –

Witch of the Alps

What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful? 45
The Rulers of the invisible?⁷⁷

Manfred

A boon –
But why should I repeat it? – 'twere in vain.

Witch of the Alps

I know not that – let thy lips utter it. –

Manfred⁷⁸

Well – though it torture me – 'tis but the same.
My pang shall find a voice. – From my youth upwards, 50
My Spirit walked not with the Souls of men –
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes.
The thirst of their Ambition was not mine –
The aim of their existence was not mine –
My joys – my griefs – my passions & my powers 55
Made me a stranger – though I wore the form

77: *the most powerful* / *The Rulers of the invisible*: evidently the Seven Spirits in I i answer this description.

78: The long speech of Manfred from 49-97 is perhaps the most obvious point at which B. is writing a riposte to *Alastor*: see especially ll.18-49 of Shelley's poem. But see also above, I ii 29-36n, 65-74n, 90n, this speech, 81-3n, and below, II iv, 144-5n.

I had no sympathy with breathing flesh –
 Nor mid'st the Creatures of Clay that girded me –
 Was there but One who – but of her anon. –
 I said with men and with the thoughts of men 60
 I held but slight communion – but instead
 My joy was in the Wilderness – to breathe
 The difficult air of the iced Mountain's top
 Where the birds dare not build – nor insect's wing
 Flit o'er the herbless Granite;⁷⁹ or to plunge 65
 Into the torrent – and⁸⁰ to roll along
 On⁸¹ the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
 Of river=stream or Ocean in their flow –
 In these my early Strength exulted, –⁸² or
 To follow through the Night the moving Moon⁸³ 70
 The stars and their development, – or catch
 The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim,
 Or to look listening on the scattered leaves
 While Autumn Winds were at their Evening=Song; –
 These were my pastimes – & to be alone. – – 75
 For if the beings of whom I was one –
 Hating to be so – crossed me in my path –
 I felt myself degraded back to them
 And was all Clay again. – And then I dived
 In my lone wanderings to the caves of death 80
 Searching it's cause in it's effect,⁸⁴ and drew
 From withered bones – & skulls & heaped up dust,
 Conclusions most forbidden. –⁸⁵ Then I passed

79: Echoes *The Prisoner of Chillon*, l.238: *Or shrubless crags within the mist ...*

80: The rough draft has "or to roll".

81: The rough draft has "In the swift whirl"

82: B. was himself an accomplished swimmer from youth.

83: Echoes *The Ancient Mariner*, l.263: *The moving moon went up the sky / And nowhere did abide ...*

84: B. may intend a reference here to Aeneas' descent into Hades in *Aeneid* Book VI, which is according to Thomas Taylor a metaphor for or parable about the Soul's entombment in the Body.

85: E.H. Coleridge refers to the meditation on death at *CHP* II sts.5-6:

*Look on its broken arch, its ruined wall,
 Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
 Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
 The dome of Thought, the palace of the Soul:
 Behold, through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,*

The nights of years in sciences untaught
 Save in the old=time, – & with time & toil – 85
 And weary vigils – & unbroken fasts – ⁸⁶
 And terrible Ordeal – & such penance
 As in itself has power upon the Air
 And Spirits that do compass air & earth
 Space & the peopled Infinite – I made 90
 Mine eyes familiar with Eternity:
 Such as before me did the Magi, and
 He who from out their fountain=dwellings raised
 + Eros & Anteros at Gadara, ⁸⁷

*The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit
 And Passion's host, that never brooked control:
 Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ
 People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?*

Compare also the Narrator (not the protagonist Poet) in Shelley's *Alastor*, ll.23-9:

*I have made my bed
 In charnels and on coffins, where black death
 Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
 Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
 Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
 Thy messenger, to render up the tale
 Of what we are.*

86: This line appears in the rough draft, not in the fair copy, and has been ignored by everyone until now. See Cochran, *A Note on the Text of Manfred Act II*, *Byron Journal*, 1994, p.79. B. may have felt it redundant.

87: Refers to the following dualistic myth, as reported by Thomas Taylor in a note to his translation of Pausanias: The demon Anteros. *Of this power, who avenges the injuries of lovers, the following remarkable story is told by Eunapius in his Life of Jamblichus: "This philosopher went with his disciples to Gadara in Syria, a place so famous for baths, that after Baiae in Campania it is the second in the Roman empire. Here a dispute about baths arising while they were bathing, Jamblichus smiling said to them: 'Though what I am to disclose is not pious, yet for your sakes it shall be undertaken;' and at the same time he ordered his disciples to enquire of the natives, what appellations had been formerly given to two of the hot fountains, which were indeed less than the others, but more elegant. Upon enquiry, they found themselves unable to discover the cause of their nomination; but were informed that the one was called Eros or Love, and the other Anteros, or the god who avenges the injuries of lovers. Jamblichus immediately touching the water with his hand (for he sat, perhaps, on the margin of the fountain), and murmuring a few words, raised from the bottom of the fountain a fair boy, of a moderate stature, whose hair seemd to be tinged with gold, and the upper part of whose breast was of a luminous appearance. His companions being astonished at the novelty of the affair, Let us pass on, says he, to the next fountain;*

As I do thee; – & with my knowledge grew

95

+ Note) The philosopher Iamblichus – the story of the raising of Eros & Anteros may be found in his life by Eunapius. – ⁸⁸ It is well told. –

The thirst of knowledge – and the power & joy
Of this most bright Intelligence – until –

Witch of the Alps

Proceed. –

Manfred

Oh! I but thus prolonged my words
Boasting these idle attributes – because – 100
As I approach the core of my heart's grief –
But – to my task – I have not named to thee –
Father – or mother – mistress – friend – or being
With whom I wore the chain of human ties
If I had such – they seemed not such to me – 105
Yet there was One – –

Witch of the Alps

Spare not thyself – Proceed –

and at the same time he arose, fixed in thought, and, performing the same ceremonies as before, called forth the other Love, who was in all respects similar to the former, except that his hair scattered in his neck was blacker, and was like the sun in refulgence. At the same time, both boys eagerly embraced Iamblichus, as if he had been their natural parent: but he immediately restored them to their proper seats, and, when he had washed, departed from the place.” – The Description of Greece by Pausanias (1794) III 251-2. Iamblichus (who died c. 330 A.D.) was a Syrian neo-Platonist philosopher, said to have been much admired by Julian the Apostate. B. wishes us to see Manfred as an investigator of Neo-Platonic spiritual mysteries – although the text as a whole does not finally bear a Neo-Platonic interpretation.

88: In the rough draft this note reads “+ the Philosopher Iamblichus – the story of the raising of Eros & Anteros may be found in his Life by Eunapius – <or quoted in the notes to Taylor’s Pausanias>”; rough draft, bottom of Sheet 11 sides 2 and 3. See MSYR Byron I pp.66-7.

Manfred

She was like me in lineaments – her eyes –
Her hair – her features, – all, to the very tone
Even of her voice – they said were like to mine –
But softened all and tempered into beauty⁸⁹ – 110
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings
The Quest of hidden knowledge, and a Mind
To comprehend the Universe – nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine –
Pity and smiles and tears which I had not – 115
And tenderness – but that I had for her –
Humility – and that I never had –
Her faults were mine – her virtues were her own –
I loved her & destroyed her –

Witch of the Alps

With thy hand?

Manfred

Not with my hand but Heart – which broke her heart – 120
It gazed on mine & withered, – I have shed
Blood but not her's – & yet her blood was shed –
I saw, & could not staunch it. –

Witch of the Alps

And for this

A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise above, 125
Mingling with us & ours – thou dost forego
The Gifts of our great knowledge, & shrink'st back,
To recreant Mortality – Away! – –

Manfred

Daughter of Air! – I tell thee since that hour –
But words are breath, –⁹⁰ look on me in my sleep – 130
Or watch my watchings – Come and sit by me!
My Solitude is Solitude no more

89: Echoes the words of Sebastian to Antonio at *Twelfth Night*, II i 21-3: *A lady sir, though it was said she much resembled me, was yet of many accounted beautiful.*

90: Echoes the words of Falstaff at *Henry IV* i V i 132: *What is that honour? Air.*

But peopled with the Furies – I have gnashed
 My teeth in darkness till returning morn
 Then cursed myself till Sunset. – I have prayed 135
 For madness as a blessing – 'tis denied me. –
 I have affronted Death – but in the war
 Of Elements the waters shrunk from me
 And fatal things passed harmless⁹¹ – the cold hand
 Of an all pitiless Demon held me back, 140
 Back by a single hair which would not break. –
 In phantasy – Imagination – all
 The Affluence of my Soul – which one day was
 A Croesus in creation – ⁹² I plunged deep –
 But like an ebbing wave it dashed me back 145
 Into the Gulph of my unfathomed Thought,
 I plunged amidst Mankind – Forgetfulness –
 I sought in all save where 'tis to be found,
 And that I have to learn – my Sciences
 My long pursued & superhuman art, 150
 Is mortal here – I dwell in my despair –
 And live & live forever.

Witch of the Alps

It may be
 That I can aid thee.

Manfred

To do this thy power
 Must wake the dead – or lay me low with them –
 Do so – in any shape – in any hour – 155

91: *in the war / Of elements the waters shrunk from me / And fatal things passed harmless:* compare *The Curse of Kehama*:

*And Water shall hear me,
 And know thee and fly thee;
 And the Winds shall not touch thee
 When they pass by thee,
 And the Dews shall not wet thee,
 When they fall nigh thee ...*

See also above, I i 254-7.

92: *The affluence of my Soul which one day was / A Croesus in creation:* Croesus was the legendarily wealthy King of Lydia in the sixth century B.C.

With any torture – so it be the last. –

Witch of the Alps

That is not in my province – but if thou
Wilt swear obedience to my will – and do
My bidding – it may help thee to thy wishes.

Manfred

I will not swear – obey! & whom? the Spirits 160
Whose presence I command – and be the Slave
Of those who served me – never. –

Witch of the Alps

Is this all?
Hast thou no gentler answer,⁹³ yet bethink thee
And pause ere thou rejectest.

Manfred

I have said it. –

Witch of the Alps

Enough – I may retire then – Say!

Manfred

Retire! 165

(The Witch disappears)

Manfred (alone)

We are the fools of time and terror – days
Steal on us & steal from us – yet we live
Loathing our life – & dreading still to die –
In all the days of this detested yoke –
This heaving burthen, this accursed breath –⁹⁴ 170
This vital weight upon the struggling heart
Which sinks with sorrow – or beats quick with pain

93: *Hast thou no gentler answer – yet bethink thee*: compare the words of the Duke of Venice to Shylock at *The Merchant of Venice* IV i 33: *We all expect a gentle answer, Jew*.

94: This line is in the draft but not the fair copy: B. may have felt it to be redundant.

Or joy that ends in agony or faintness –
 In all the days of past & future – for
 In life there is no present – we can number 175
 How few! how less than few! – wherein the Soul
 Forbears to pant for death – & yet draws back
 As from a stream in winter –⁹⁵ though the chill
 Be but a moment's. – I have one resource –
 Still in my science – I can call the dead – 180
 And ask them what it is we dread to be –
 The sternest answer can but be the Grave –
 And that is nothing – if they answer not. –
 The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
 Of Endor;⁹⁶ and the Spartan Monarch drew 185
 From the Byzantine Maid's unsleeping Spirit
 An answer and his destiny – he slew
 That which he loved unknowing what he slew
 And died unpardoned – though he called in aid
 The Phyxian Jove and in Phygalia roused 190
 The Arcadian Evocators to compel
 The indignant Shadow to depose her wrath
 Or fix her term of vengeance – she replied
 + In words of dubious import but fulfilled.⁹⁷ –

95: ... not an hour – wherein the Soul / Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back / As from a stream in winter: echoes Psalm 42, 1: *As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

96: For Saul and the Witch of Endor, see *II Samuel* 28 7-5.

97: *The Spartan Monarch* is Pausanias, the general who, having beaten the Persians at Plataea, then negotiated with them with a view to becoming ruler of all Greece: a mixture of renegado, Macbeth, and Tarquinius Superbus, as the relevant part of his story, told thus in North's Plutarch, shows: ... *King Pausanias being on a time in the city of Byzance, sent for Cleonicé, a young maiden of noble house, to take his pleasure of her. Her parents durst not keep her from him, by reason of his cruelty, but suffered him to carry her away. The young gentlewoman prayed the groom of Pausanias' chamber to take away the lights, and thinking in the dark to come to Pausanias' bed that was asleep, groping for the bed as softly as she could to make no noise, she unfortunately hit against the lamp, and overthrew it. The falling of the lamp made such a noise that it wakened him on the sudden, and thought straight therewithal that some of his enemies had been come traitorously to kill him, whereupon he took his dagger lying under his bed's head, and so stabbed it in the young virgin, that she died immediately upon it. Howbeit she never let Pausanias take rest after that, because her spirit came every night and appeared unto him, as he would fain have slept, and spake this angrily to him in*

If I had never lived – that which I love 195
Had still been living; had I never loved
That which I love would still be beautiful –
Happy and giving happiness – what is She?⁹⁸

+ The Story of Pausanias King of Sparta (who commanded the Greeks at the battle of Platea And afterwards perished for an attempt to betray the Lacedemonians) & Cleonice is told in Plutarch's life of Cimon – & in the Laconics of Pausanias the Sophist in his Description of Greece.

What is she now? A sufferer for my sins –
A thing I dare not think upon – or nothing. – 200
Within few hours I shall not call in vain –
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
Until this hour I never shrank to gaze
On Spirit good or evil – now I tremble –
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart, 205
But I can act even what I most abhor, –
And champion human Fears – the Night approaches.

Exit Manfred.

verse, as followeth: "Keep thou thyself upright, and justice see thou fear, / For woe and shame be unto him that justice down doth bear". Taylor's Pausanias takes up the story: *This was the deed, from the guilt of which Pausanias could never fly, though he employed all-various purifications, received the deprecations of Jupiter Phyxius, and went to Phigalea to the Arcadian evocators [line 190] of souls. He therefore suffered a just punishment for his behaviour towards Cleonice, and divinity itself.* – *The Description of Greece by Pausanias* (1794) I 304-5. The full reference is *Pausanias III (Lakonia) XVII, 8*. Jupiter Phyxius was a god who assisted fugitives. Pausanias (the tyrant) was finally captured by his enemies, bricked up in a temple, and starved to death.

98: *What is she now? A sufferer for my sins, / A thing I dare not think upon, or nothing:* enlarges the hint at II i 30, that Manfred does not know whether Astarte is suffering in a Christian afterlife, or whether she has suffered a Neo-Platonic death of the soul for sharing in his blasphemous abominations. See also II ii 83 and n.

Act II scene iii.⁹⁹

(The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.

Enter 1st. Destiny)¹⁰⁰**1st. Destiny**

The Moon is rising broad & round & bright
 And here on snows – where never human foot
 Of common mortal trod –¹⁰¹ we nightly tread
 And leave no traces, o'er the savage Sea
 The glassy Ocean of the mountain ice 5
 We skim it's rugged breakers which put on
 The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam
 Frozen in a moment – a dead Whirlpool's image.¹⁰²
 And this most steep fantastic Pinnacle,
 The fret=work of some Earthquake, – where the Clouds 10
 Pause to repose themselves in passing by –
 Is sacred to our revels – or our vigils –
 Here do I wait my sisters – on our way
 To the Hall of Arimanes – for – tonight
 Is our great festival – 'tis strange they come not. 15

(A Voice without singing)

99: Act II scenes iii and iv should be compared with *Macbeth* IV i *passim*: Manfred commands the scene where Macbeth only thinks he does. This gives Shakespeare opportunities for irony which B. eschews. II iii also echoes Coleridge's *Famine, Fire and Slaughter*, which Polidori (*Diary*, p.115) reports Mary Shelley to have recited on June 1 1816. More remote influences may be the *Auerbachs Keller*, *Hexenküche*, and *Walpurgisnacht* scenes from *Faust*; although Faust takes only an observer's role in the first two of these, and Goethe's scenes are squalid and farcical where B.'s is solemn.

100: The *Destinies* are the three Fates, Lachesis, who determines man's lot at birth, Clotho, who spins the thread of life, and Atropos, who cuts it at death. According to Aeschylus in *Prometheus Bound*, even Zeus has to bow to them (though what they will ultimately decree for him is left ambiguous).

101: ... *here on snows where never human foot / Of common mortal trod*: B. ignores the fact that the Jungfrau had been climbed, in 1811. Compare *CHP* IV, 73, 6-7: *But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear / Her never-trodden snow ...*

102: ALPINE JOURNAL: echoes the entry for September 23: ... *mounted again & rode to the higher Glacier – twilight – but distinct – very fine Glacier – like a frozen hurricane ...* (BLJ V 102).

The Captive Usurper¹⁰³
 Hurl'd down from the throne
 Lay buried in torpor –
 Forgotten & lone
 I broke through his slumbers 20
 I shiver'd his chain –
 I leagu'd him with Numbers –
 He's Tyrant again!
 With the blood of a million he'll answer my care
 With a Nation's destruction – his flight & despair. 25

(2^d. voice without)

The Ship sail'd on – the Ship sail'd fast
 But I left not a sail – & I left not a mast –
 There is not a plank of the hull or the deck –
 And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck
 Save one whom I held as he swum by the hair 30
 And he was a subject well worthy my care
 A traitor on land – and a Pirate at sea –¹⁰⁴
 But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me.¹⁰⁵

103: The Captive Usurper is Napoleon. CPW (IV 473) comments, "The Spirit prophesies that Napoleon will return from St. Helena as he had from Elba."

104: ... *one, whom I held as he swum by the hair, / And he was a subject well worthy my care – / A traitor on land, and a Pirate at sea, / But I saved to wreak further havoc for me:* E.H. Coleridge detects a reference to Thomas Cochrane, 10th earl of Dundonald (1775-1860) highly successful admiral – *a Pirate at sea*. Implicated unfairly in a financial scandal he had been imprisoned by the establishment enemies he had made in his exposure of Admiralty corruption (B.'s *A traitor on land* seems ironic). On March 11 1815, Hobhouse had received a letter from his father announcing the simultaneous escapes of Napoleon from Elba and Cochrane from Newgate. Both were recaptured. Cochrane later became famous as the friend and naval assistant of Simon Bolivar; although B. could not have known in 1816 that that was to be the case, the Second Voice's *I saved him to wreak further havoc for me* is in a way prophetic, if we take the demons to be proponents of political upheaval and freedom-fighting. B. may also be drawing a link between this contemporary reference and the ones in *Macbeth* II iii ("Oh, come in, equivocator!") alluding to the Jesuit Henry Garnet, and his *Treatise on Equivocation*: each reference would tie its play's action to the present day.

105: The Second Voice's speech at ll.26-33 derives from *Macbeth* I iii 7-25: *Her husband's from Aleppo gone, / Master o'th'Tiger; / But in a sieve I'll thither sail, / And like a rat without a tail, / I'll do, and I'll do, and I'll do ... Though his bark cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tossed ... Here I have a pilot's thumb, / Wracked as homeward he did come ...*

1st. Destiny – answering –

The City lies sleeping. –
 The Morn to deplore it 35
 May dawn on it weeping.
 Sullenly – slowly –
 The black Plague flew oer it –
 Thousands lie lowly;
 Tens of thousands shall perish – 40
 The living shall fly from
 The Sick they should cherish
 But nothing can vanquish¹⁰⁶
 The touch that they die from –
 Sorrow and Anguish – 45
 And Evil and Dread
 Envelope a Nation –
 The blest are the dead –
 Who see not the sight
 Of their own desolation. – 50
 This work of a Night –
 This wreck of a realm – this deed of my doing –
 For ages I've done & shall still be renewing.

(Enter the 2^d. & 3^d. Destinies)

The Three

Our hands contain the hearts of men –
 Our footsteps are their graves –
 We only give to take again 55
 The Spirits of our Slaves. –

1st. Destiny

Welcome – Where's Nemesis?

2^d. Destiny –

At some great work –
 But what I know not for my hands were full –

106: In starting a new page, B. fails to indent this line, so he has two consecutive lines not indented. I have corrected.

3^d. Destiny.

Behold she cometh

(Enter Nemesis)¹⁰⁷

1st. Destiny

Say where has't thou been – 60
My Sisters & thyself are slow tonight.¹⁰⁸ –

Nemesis

I was detained repairing shattered thrones –¹⁰⁹
Marrying fools – restoring dynasties –
Avenging men upon their enemies
And making them repent their own revenge – 65
Goadng the wise to madness – from the dull
Shaping out Oracles to rule the world
Afresh – for they were waxing out of date
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves –
And weigh kings in the balance – & to speak 70
Of Freedom the forbidden fruit; –¹¹⁰ Away –

107: *Nemesis*: Originally a minor female deity, she became synonymous with Retribution. Using her alternative name, Adrasteia, Aeschylus in *Prometheus Bound*, warns men to fear her. When proof-reading the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* (written the year after *Manfred*) William Gifford came across a repetition he was starting to find onerous, and chid B. in the margin: *Recollect you have Nemesis again*. B. was unrepentant: *I know it – and if I had her ten times would not alter once – she is my particular belief and acquaintance – and I wont blaspheme against her for any body* (CPW II 330). Taylor's Pausanias has this to say about her: *Proclus on Hesiod informs us that Nemesis was celebrated in hymns as the angel of justice; and that she is represented by Hesiod clothed in a white garment, because she is an intellectual power, far removed from the atheistic and dark essence of the passions* (III 201).

108: Compare *Macbeth*, I iii 1-3: *Where hast thou been, sister? – Killing swine. – Sister, where thou?* and so on.

109: *I was detained repairing shattered thrones* ... Nemesis is seen operating in recent history through the restorations which were effected at the Congress of Vienna.

110: B.'s concept of Nemesis as the protector of tyrants may be contrasted with the role assumed by Sathan in *The Vision of Judgement*, where he pretends, at least, to be the spokesman for freedom. There are feeling references to Nemesis in letters of January 28 and February 3 1817 (BLJ V 165 and 168) which perhaps indicate when B. was writing this scene. In another letter, to Lady Byron, of November 18 1818, he writes, *It was not in vain that I invoked Nemesis in the Midnight of Rome*

We have outstaid the hour – mount we our Clouds! –

(Exeunt. –)

from the awfulest of her Ruins (BLJ VI 81). It was while in Rome that he wrote his new version of the Third Act – see below, III iv, first speech. The letter relates to the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, which B. seems to see as a result of his invocation.

Act II scene iv.

Scene 4th. The Hall of Arimanes. – –
Arimanes on his throne – a globe of fire – ¹¹¹
surrounded by the Spirits. – – – –

Hymn of the Spirits¹¹²

Hail to our Master – Prince of earth & air!¹¹³

Who walks the clouds & waters, in his hand

The sceptre of the Elements – which tear

Themselves to Chaos at his high command!

He breatheth – and a tempest shakes the sea –

5

He speaketh – and the Clouds reply in thunder –

He gazeth – from his glance the Sunbeams flee –

He moveth – Earthquakes rend the world asunder.

111: *Arimanes on his throne – a Globe of fire – surrounded by the Spirits*: echoes *Vathek*: “An infinity of elders with streaming beards, and afrits in complete armour, had prostrated themselves before the ascent of a lofty eminence; on the top of which, upon a globe of fire, sat the formidable Eblis. His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours. In his large eyes appeared both pride and despair: his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light. In his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre, that causes the monster Ouranbad, the afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble”. (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, pp.110-11.) For Arimanes (who is a separate being in *Vathek*) see D’Herbelot’s *Bibliothèque Orientale*, entry for Aherman ou Ahermen: C’est ainsi que les anciens Persans appeloient le principe du mal, opposé à Armozd ou Ormozd, principe du bien. Les Grecs & les Latins les ont appelés Arimanius & Oramazdes, lorsqu’ils ont expliqué la doctrine de Zoroastre touchant les deux principes. ... Un ... Poète Persien, nommé Assedi, dit que le propre d’Ahermen est de semer par tout la discorde. Les anciens Romains de Perse nous racontent des merveilles de la montagne d’Ahermen: car ils disent que c’est en ce lieu-là que les démons s’assemblent pour y recevoir les ordres de leur Prince, & qu’ils partent pour aller exercer leur malice dans toutes les parties du monde – *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1781–3) I 184. Ahriman, god of darkness, was the twin brother of Ormuzd, god of light, in Zoroastrian belief. See section below on Zoroastrianism. B. seems anxious to keep both Christian myth and Neo-Platonism at arms’ length.

112: Noticeable here is the absence of Alpine imagery: B. has now put the Alpine Journal behind him as a source.

113: *Hail to our Master, Prince of Earth and Air!*: see *Ephesians* 2,2: ... in past time ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air ... At *The Vision of Judgement* 1.305, Sathan is referred to as *The Prince of Air*. See also Pope, *Epistle to Bathurst*, 1.353.

Beneath his footsteps the Volcanos rise, –
 His Shadow is the Pestilence, – his path 10
 The Comets herald through the burning¹¹⁴ skies –
 And Planets turn to ashes at his wrath. –
 To him War offers daily sacrifice
 To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his –
 With all it's Infinite of agonies – 15
 And his the Spirit of whatever is. –¹¹⁵

(Enter the Destinies & Nemesis)

1st. Destiny

Glory to Arimanes! – On the earth
 His power increaseth – both my Sisters did
 His bidding – nor did I neglect my duty. –

2^d. Destiny

Glory to Arimanes! – we who bow 20
 The necks of men – bow down before his throne.

3^d. Destiny

Glory to Arimanes – we await
 His nod. – – –

Nemesis

Sovereign of Sovereigns – we are thine –
 And all that liveth, more or less is ours –¹¹⁶

114: The fair copy gives “crackling” as an alternative to “burning”.

115: May be compared with the following part of a letter from Shelley to Peacock, written on July 22 1816 after viewing Mont Blanc and the Vale of Chamounix, before parting company with B.: *Do you who assert the supremacy of Ahriman imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death & frost, sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the unsparing hand of necessity, & that he casts round him as the first assays of his final usurpation avalanches, torrents, rocks & thunders – and above all, these deadly glaciers at once the proofs & symbols of his reign* (LPBS I 499).

116: ... *all that liveth, more or less, is ours, / And most things wholly so*: compare Sathan's speech to the Archangel Michael at TVoJ, st.40:

“Look to our earth – or rather mine – it was,

“Once, more thy master's – but I triumph not

“In this poor planet's conquest, nor, Alas!

“Need he thou servest envy me my lot –

And most things wholly so – still to increase 25
Our power increasing thine – demands our care –
And we are vigilant – thy late commands
Hath been fulfilled to the utmost. –

(Enter Manfred. –)

A Spirit

What is here?

A mortal! thou most rash & fatal wretch –
Bow down & worship. –

2^d. Spirit

I do know the man

30

A Magian of great power – & fearful skill

3^d. Spirit

Bow down & worship – Slave – what, know'st thou not
Thine & our Sovereign? – Tremble, & obey –

All the Spirits

Prostrate thyself and thy condemned clay
Child of the earth – or dread the worst.

Manfred

I know it –

35

And yet ye see I kneel not. –

4th. Spirit

'Twill be taught thee.

Manfred

'Tis taught already – many a night on the earth
On the bare ground have I bowed down my face,
And strewed my head with ashes, I have known
The fullness of humiliation – for
I sunk before my vain despair – & knelt
To my own desolation. –

40

*“With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
“In worship round him he may have forgot
“Yon weak creation of such paltry things ...*

5th. Spirit

Dost thou dare
 Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
 What the whole Earth accords beholding not
 The terror of his Glory? – Crouch! – I say. – 45

Manfred

Bid him bow down to that which is above him –
 The over=ruling Infinite – the Maker
 Who made him not for worship; let him kneel,
 And we will kneel together. –

The Spirits

Crush the worm –
 Tear him in pieces –

1st. Destiny

Hence! – Avaunt! – he's mine. 50
 Prince of the powers invisible! – this man
 Is of no common order – as his port
 And presence here denote – his sufferings
 Have been of an immortal Nature – like
 Our own – his knowledge & his powers & will 55
 As far as is compatible with Clay
 Which clogs the ethereal essence – have been such
 As Clay hath seldom borne, his aspirations
 Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
 And they have only taught him what we know – 60
 That knowledge is not happiness – and science
 But an exchange of ignorance for that
 Which is another kind of ignorance.¹¹⁷ –
 This is not all – the passions – attributes
 Of earth & heaven – from which no power – nor being 65

117: ... knowledge is not happiness – and science – / But an exchange of ignorance for that / Which is another kind of ignorance: compare *Faust*, II.360–5:

*Heisse Magister, heisse Doktor gar
 Und ziehe schon an die zehen Jahr
 Herauf, herab, und quer und krumm
 Meine Schüler an der Nase herum –
 Und sehe, dass wir nichts wissen können!
 Das will mir schier das Herz verbrennen.*

Nor breath from the worm upwards, is exempt –
Have pierced his heart – & in their consequence –
Made him a thing – which – I who pity not
Yet pardon those who pity. – He is mine –
And thine it may be – be it so – or not – 70
No other Spirit in this region hath
A Soul like his – or power upon his Soul. –

Nemesis

What doth he here then?

1st. Destiny

Let him answer that.

Manfred

Ye know what I have known – & without power
I could not be amongst ye – but there are 75
Powers deeper still beyond – I come in quest
Of such to answer unto what I seek¹¹⁸ –

Nemesis

What wouldst thou? –

Manfred

Thou can'st not reply to me,
Call up the dead – my question is for them.

Nemesis

Great Arimanes – doth thy Will avouch 80
The wishes of this mortal?

Arimanes

Yea!

Nemesis

Whom would'st thou
Uncharnel? – – –

118: Should be contrasted with the more vulnerable lines of Macbeth at IV i 50–61: *I conjure you, by that which you profess, / Howe'er you come to know it, answer me ...*

Manfred

One without a tomb.¹¹⁹ – Call up –
 Astarte.¹²⁰ —

Nemesis

Shadow! or Spirit!
 Whatever thou art –
 Which still doth¹²¹ inherit
 The whole or a part –

85

119: *One without a tomb:* adds to previous hints (II i 29–30, II ii 198–9) that Manfred, though he may know Astarte to be dead, has no knowledge of her spiritual fate. That she had literally had no interment and no memorial would add to his desperation, whatever the case with her soul.

120: Though she says only seven words, Astarte is first among the *ewig-weibliche* characters of B.'s poetry. The name is legendary. See *Paradise Lost*, I 437–46:

*With these in troop
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians call'd
 Astarte, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent Horns;
 To whose bright Image nightly by the Moon
 Sidonian Virgins paid thir Vows and Songs,
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood
 Her Temple on th'offensive Mountain, built
 By that uxorious King, whose heart though large,
 Beguil'd by fair Idolatresses, fell
 To idols foul.*

In near-eastern myth Astarte was confused with, or perhaps identical to, both Ashtaroth (see rejected Act III below, *Judges II* 13, *Paradise Lost* I 421, or Milton's *Nativity Ode*, 200: *Moonèd Ashtaroth, / Heav'ns Queen and Mother both*) and Astoreth (*II Kings* 23, 13, or *Paradise Lost* I 438) the wife to Adonis. Cicero (*De Natura Deorum* III) links her with Venus, and says she comes from Syria and Cyprus. With Pasiphae and Semiramis (*Don Juan* II 1239 and V 480) she was worshipped as a fertility goddess. Another important source may not be myth but the sixty-seventh of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*, where the name is given to the female partner in a tale of sibling incest – both principals being Zoroastrians. Voltaire also uses the name in his eastern comic romance *Zadig*. However, the most immediate inspiration may for B. have been the dual figures of the Arab maiden and the Veilèd Maiden in Shelley's *Alastor*; see 129–39 and 149 *et. seq.* Astarte, as she appears in this scene, unites the reality of the first with the inaccessibility of the second; in general she is (was) a real “other”, as opposed to a figment of the protagonist's imagination – one of the advantages B. derives from taking Shelley's narrative and recasting part of it in dramatic form.

121: In the margin, B. writes “(or dost Qy.?)”

Of the form of thy birth
 Of the mould of thy clay
 Which returned to the earth, 90
 Reappear to the day!
 Bear what thou borest
 The heart and the form –
 And the aspect thou worst
 Redeem from the worm – 95
 Appear – Appear – Appear –
 ho sent thee there – requires thee here! –

(The Phantom of Astarte rises & stands in the midst. —)

Manfred

Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek¹²²
 But now I see it is no living hue
 But a strange hectic – like the unnatural red, 100
 Which Autumn plants upon the perished leaf.
 It is the same! Oh God! That I should dread
 To look upon the same – Astarte! no –
 I cannot speak to her, – but bid her speak –
 Forgive me or condemn me. – 105

Nemesis

By the power which hath broken
 The grave which enthralled thee
 Speak to him who hath spoken –
 Or those who have called thee! –

Manfred

She is silent – 110
 And in that silence I am more than answered.

122: Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek: should be contrasted with the words of Romeo to the seemingly-dead Juliet at *Romeo and Juliet* V iii 92–6: "... beauty's ensign yet / Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks, / And death's pale flag is not advanced there". B. echoes this idea at *The Prisoner of Chillon*, 190–1: With all the while a cheek whose bloom / Was as a mockery of the tomb ... However, compare also CHP IV 102 3 ... 9: ... a cloud / ... yet shed / A sunset charm around her, and illumine / With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead, / Of her consuming cheek, the autumnal leaf-like red.

Nemesis

My power extends no further – Prince of air! –
It rests with thee alone – command her voice –

Arimanes

Spirit! obey this Sceptre!

Nemesis

Silent still! –

She is not of our order but belongs 115
To the other powers – Mortal! thy quest is vain –
And we are baffled also. –

Manfred

Hear me – Hear me¹²³ –

Astarte! my Beloved! speak to me –
I have so much endured – so much endure –
Look on me – the Grave hath not changed thee more 120
Than I am changed for thee – thou loved'st me
Too much, as I loved thee – we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were

123: Manfred's lines at 117–150 may be compared to Othello's words to the dead Desdemona at V ii 275-8:

*When we shall meet at compt,
This look of thine will hurl my soul from Heaven,
And fiends will snatch at it.*

However, a more important source – though the circumstances of the lovers differ, in that Manfred never deserted Astarte – lies in the words of Aeneas to Dido at *Aeneid* VI, 456-66:

*“infelix Dido, verus mihi nuntius ergo
venerat extinctam, ferroque extrema secutam?
funeris heu! tibi causa fui? per sidera iuro,
per superos, et si qua fides tellure sub ima est,
invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi 460
sed me iussa deum, quae nunc has ire per umbras,
per loca senta situ cogunt noctemque profundam,
imperiis egere suis; nec credere quivi
hunc tantum tibi me discessu ferre dolorem.
siste gradum teque aspectu ne subtrahe nostro. 465
quem fugis? extremum fato, quod te adloquor, hoc est.”*

Perhaps disgusted by his hypocrisy at 463-4, Dido says nothing to Aeneas in return.

The deadliest sin to love as we have loved
 Say that thou loath'st me not – that I do bear 125
 This punishment for both¹²⁴ – that thou wilt be
 One of the blessed – and that I shall die
 For hitherto all hateful things conspire
 To bind me in existence – in a life
 Which makes me shrink from Immortality 130
 A future like the past – I cannot rest.
 I know not what I ask, nor what I seek –
 I feel but what thou art – & what I am, –
 And I would hear yet once before I perish
 The voice which was my Music. – Speak to me! 135
 For I have called on thee in the still night
 Startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs –
 And woke the mountain wolves – & made the caves
 Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name –¹²⁵
 Which answered me – many things answered me – 140
 Spirits & men – but thou wert silent all –
 Yet speak to me – I have outwatched the Stars
 And gazed oer heaven in vain in search of thee –
 Speak to me – I have wandered oer the earth
 And never found thy likeness –¹²⁶ Speak to me – 145
 Look on the fiends around – they feel for me –
 I fear them not – & feel for thee alone –
 Speak to me – though it be in wrath – but say –
 I reck not what – but let me hear thee once
 This once – once more –

124: *Say ... that I do bear / This punishment for both:* one of the few sympathetic references to vicarious suffering and atonement in all B.'s work. He ordinarily displayed little interest, or belief, in the idea. The fact that Manfred's offer to suffer in Astarte's place is unanswered is doubtless significant.

125: Should be compared with Viola's words to Olivia at *Twelfth Night* I v 252-60:
*Write loyal cantons of contemned love
 And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
 Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
 And make the babbling gossip of the air
 Cry out "Olivia!"*

126: *I have wandered oer the earth – / And never found thy likeness:* recalls the wanderings of the Poet in Alastor.

The Phantom of Astarte

Manfred!

ManfredSay on – Say on¹²⁷ – 150

I live but in the sound – it is thy voice!

Phantom

Manfred – tomorrow ends thine earthly ills.

Farewell!

Manfred

Yet one word more – am I forgiven?

Phantom

Farewell!

Manfred

Say – shall we meet again –

Phantom

Farewell!

Manfred

One word for Mercy! – Say – thou lov'st me. 155

Phantom

Manfred! –

(The Spirit of Astarte disappears.)

127: Compare the underdeveloped final episode in *Vathek*: *Kalilah and his sister made reciprocal gestures of imprecation; all testified their horror for each other by the most ghastly convulsions, and screams that could not be smothered. All severally plunged themselves into the accursed multitude, there to wander in an eternity of unabating anguish.* (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, pp.119-20.) Beckford debated whether or not to extend the story, but never printed it. For B.'s curiosity, see letter to Rogers, March 3 1818 (BLJ VI 17-18): Rogers had been to Fonthill and heard more about the extra part of *Vathek*.

Nemesis

She's gone & will not be recalled,¹²⁸
Her words will be fulfilled – return to the earth.

A Spirit

He is convulsed – this is to be a mortal
And seek the things beyond Mortality.¹²⁹ –

Another Spirit

Yet see – he mastereth himself – & makes 160
His torture¹³⁰ tributary to his will –
Had he been one of us he would have made
An awful Spirit. –

Nemesis

Hast thou further question –
Of our great Sovereign or his worshippers?

Manfred

None.

Nemesis

Then for a time farewell.

Manfred

We meet then – 165
Where? on the earth? –

Nemesis

That will be seen hereafter. –¹³¹

Manfred

Even as thou wilt – and for the grace accorded –
I now depart a debtor – Fare ye well! –

128: *She's gone, and will not be recalled:* compare *Hamlet*, I i 52: *'Tis gone, and will not answer.*

129: The rough draft has “above mortality”.

130: The rough draft has “nature”, which B. writes in the fair copy but then inks “tor” over “na”.

131: This prefix and line are in the rough draft but not in the fair copy.

(Exit Manfred)

Scene closes – end of Act 2d.¹³²

132: II iv is the last scene of the play containing Alpine imagery, and thus any recollections of B.'s mountain excursion with Hobhouse. The last Alpine Journal entry may usefully be quoted here, at the lowest point of Manfred's suffering: *In the weather for this tour (of 13 days) I have been very fortunate – fortunate in a companion (Mr. H[obhous]e) fortunate in our prospects – and exempt from even the little petty accidents & delays which often render journeys in a less wild country – disappointing. – I was disposed to be pleased – I am a lover of Nature – and an Admirer of Beauty – I can bear fatigue – & welcome privation – and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. – But in all this – the recollections of bitterness – & more especially of recent & more home desolation – which must accompany me through life – have preyed upon me here – and neither the music of the Shepherd – the crashing of the Avalanche – nor the torrent – the mountain – the Glacier – the Forest – nor the Cloud – have for one moment – lightened the weight upon my heart – nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory – around – above – & beneath me. – I am past reproaches – and there is a time for all things – I am past the wish of vengeance – and I know of none like for what I have suffered – but the hour will come – when what I feel must be felt – & the — — but enough. — — To you – dearest Augusta – I send – and for you – I have kept this record of what I have seen & felt. – Love me as you are beloved by me. — — (BLJ V 104–5).*

Act Three (first version):
Act III Scene i.

Abbot.

Peace be with Count Manfred! 20

Manfred

Thanks holy Father! – Welcome to these walls
Thy presence honours them, & blesseth those
Who dwell within them. –

Abbot

Would it were so – Count –
But I would fain confer with thee alone. –

Manfred

Herman retire –

(Exit Herman)

– what would my reverend Guest? 25

Abbot

Thus without prelude – Age & Zeal – my office –
And good intent must plead my privilege –
Our near though not acquainted Neighbourhood
May also be my herald. – Rumours strange
And of unholy nature are abroad – 30
And busy with thy name – a noble name –
For centuries – may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpaired. – – –

Manfred

Proceed. – I listen.¹³³ –

133: Compare Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter II: *My lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions. I forgive your highness's uncharitable apostrophe: I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than Manfred. Harken to him who speaks through my organs. Manfred trembled with rage and shame.*

Abbot

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
 Which are forbidden to the search of man – 35
 That with the dwellers of the dark abodes
 The many evil & unheavenly Spirits
 Which walk the valley of the Shade of Death,
 Thou communest. – I know that with mankind
 Thy fellows in creation thou dost rarely 40
 Exchange thy thoughts – & that thy Solitude
 Is as an Anchorite's – were it but holy.

Manfred

And what are they who do avouch these things?

Abbot

My pious brethren – the scared peasantry –
 Even thy own vassals – who do look on thee 45
 With most unquiet eyes – thy life's in peril –

Manfred

Take it.

Abbot

I come to save & not destroy –
 I would not pry into thy secret Soul –
 But if these things be sooth – there still is time
 For penitence & pity; reconcile thee 50
 With the true church – & through the church to heaven.

Manfred

I hear thee. – This is my reply. – Whateer
 I may have been or am doth rest between
 Heaven & myself – I shall not choose a mortal
 To be my mediator. – Have I sinned 55
 Against your ordinances? – Prove & punish.¹³⁴ –

134: From now on, italicised lines with number in square brackets are those rejected when B. revised the third act on being sent the criticisms of William Gifford (see Introduction). Murray had the first version of the third act set up in proof, for some of B.'s revisions are found on proof sheets bound up with the fair copy. Perhaps he lacked confidence in B.'s openness to criticism. On April 14 1817, B. answered him: ... *The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this*

Abbot

*Then hear & tremble! – for the headstrong wretch
Who in the mail of innate hardihood
Would shield himself – and battle for his sins –
There is the stake on earth – and beyond earth – [40]
Eternal —*

Manfred

*Charity – most reverend Father!
Becomes thy lips so much more than this menace –
That I would call thee back to it; but say
What wouldst thou with me? – – –*

Abbot

*It may be there are
Things that would shake thee – but I keep them back, [45]
And give thee till tomorrow to repent.
Then if thou dost not all devote thyself
To penance and with gift of all thy lands
To the Monastery¹³⁵ –*

act I thought good myself – the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be – & I wonder what the devil possessed me – I am very glad indeed that you sent me Mr Gifford's opinion without deduction – do you suppose me such a Sotheby as not to be very much obliged to him? or that in fact I was not, & am not, convinced & convicted in my conscience of the absurdity of this same act of nonsense? – I shall try at it again – in the mean time lay it upon the Shelf (the whole drama, I mean) but pray correct your copies of the 1st & 2d acts by the original M.S. (BLJ V 211-12). A mere fortnight later, on May 5, he wrote again: ... I send you ... the new third act of "Manfred." – I have rewritten the greater part – & returned what is not altered in the proof you sent me. – The Abbot is become a good man – & the Spirits are brought in at the death – you will find I think some good poetry in this new act here & there – & if so print it – without sending me further proofs – under Mr.G[ifford]'s correction – if he will have the goodness to overlook it (BLJ V 219).

135: *if thou dost not all devote thyself / To penance – and with gift of all thy lands / To the monastery:* in the original third act Christianity was to have had no more spiritual and moral dignity than this, to contrast with the powerful Neo-Platonic, Zoroastrian, Hellenistic-Roman and other mythologies which B. elsewhere employs. The immediate inspiration may be the imagined words of the priest who, in *Faust*, appropriates the jewels intended for Margarete:

*Hat ganze Länder aufgefressen,
Und doch noch nie sich übergessen;
Die Kirch allein, meine lieben Frauen,*

Manfred

I understand thee, – well.

Abbot

Expect no mercy; I have warned thee. –

Manfred (opening the casket)

Stop – [50]

There is a gift for thee within this casket –

(Manfred opens the casket, strikes a light, and burns some Incense –)

Manfred

*Ho – Ashtaroth!*¹³⁶ –

The Demon Ashtaroth appears, saying as follows – –

The Raven sits

On the Raven=stone,

And his black wing flits [55]

Oer the milk=white bone

To & fro, as the night=winds blow

Kann ungerechtes Gut verdauen.

Die Kirche hat einen guten Magen ...

See also *The Giaour*, 816-17: *Great largess to these walls he brought, / And thus our Abbot's favour bought; or Beppo*, 98, 2: *He made the church a present, by the way ...*

136: *Ashtaroth*: also known as *Astarte*; but the goddess became a devil, and changed sex, in the middle ages. He was associated with *Asmodeus* (see the Apocryphal *Book of Tobit*, and *The Vision of Judgement*, 1.675 *et. seq.*) who would in the popular superstition lift people up and fly about with them. *Ashtaroth's* first song seems the one detail of *Manfred* lifted directly from *Faust* Part I, and it is perhaps significant that B. deleted it. Here is the penultimate scene of Goethe's play in its entirety:

FAUST: *Was weben sie dort um dem Rabenstein?*

MEPHISTOPHELES: *Weiss nicht, was sie kochen und schaffen.*

FAUST: *Schweben auf, schweben ab, neigen sich, beugen sich.*

MEPHISTOPHELES: *Eine Hexenzunft!*

FAUST: *Sie streuen und weihen.*

MEPHISTOPHELES: *Vorbei! vorbei!* (II.4399-404)

The dramatic contexts are different. In *Manfred* the gibbet is (or would have been) merely a joke to scare the Abbot: in *Faust* it is a presentiment of Margarete's death, past which Mephistopheles and Faust hurry nervously.

*The carcase of the assassin swings
And there alone, on the Raven=stone, +
The Raven flaps his dusky wings – [60]
The fetters creak – and his ebon beak
Croaks to the close of the hollow sound –
And this is the tune by the light of the Moon
To which the Witches dance their round –
Merrily – merrily –¹³⁷ cheerily – cheerily – [65]
Merrily – merrily – speeds the ball –
The dead in their shroud – and the Demons in clouds –
Flock to the Witches Carnival. –*

*Note + Raven=stone (Rabenstein) a translation of the German word for the Gibbet, which in Germany & Switzerland is permanent & made of stone –.*¹³⁸

Abbot

*I fear thee not – hence – hence –
Avaunt thee, evil One! help – ho – without there!* [70]

Manfred

*Carry this man to the Shreckhorn¹³⁹ – to it's peak –
To it's extremest peak – watch with him there
From now till Sunrise – let him gaze & know
He neer again will be so near to Heaven –
But harm him not – & when the Morrow breaks [75]
Set him down safe in his cell – Away with him! –*

Ashtaroath

*Had I not better bring his brethren too
Convent & all to bear him company?*

137: *Merrily – Merrily:* recalls Ariel's song at *The Tempest*, V i 87–94.

138: B. returns to the Raven–stone in 1821 / 2 at *Werner*, II ii 178.

139: *The Schreckhorn:* seen by B. and Hobhouse on September 24 1816. Hobhouse recorded, *Went first by the upper glacier – the Schreckhorn rose upon us above the Mettenbergh between that mountain & the Wetterhorn – the hills before us partially covered but the white razor ridge of the great giant [the Eigher] was blazing in the sun ...*

Manfred

No, this will serve for the present. Take him up. –

Ashtaroath

Come Friar! Now an Exorcism or two [80]
And we shall fly the lighter. –

(Ashtaroath disappears with the Abbot, singing as follows)

A prodigal son – and a maid undone –
And a widow re=wedded within the year –¹⁴⁰
And a worldly Monk – and a pregnant Nun –
Are things which every day appear. – [85]

Manfred – alone.

Why would this fool break in on me? – & force
My art to pranks fantastical? – No matter –
It was not of my seeking. – My heart sickens
And weighs a fixed foreboding on my Soul,
But it is calm – calm as a sullen sea [90]
After the hurricane, – the winds are still
But the cold waves swell high & heavily –
And there is danger in them. – Such a rest
Is no repose. – My life hath been a combat
And every thought a wound, till I am scarred [95]
In the immortal part of Me. – What now?

Re=enter Herman.

My Lord – you bade me wait on you at Sunset –
He sinks behind the Mountain. –

Manfred

Doth he so?
I will look on him. –

(Manfred advances to the window of the Hall — —)
 Glorious Orb!¹⁴¹ – the Idol! 100

140: *A widow re=wedded within the year*: recalls Gertrude in Hamlet.

141: *Glorious Orb!*: this speech may owe something to the *Oration to the Sun* of Julian the Apostate, which had been translated by Thomas Taylor the Platonist. It

Of early Nature, and the vigorous race
 Of undiseased mankind, the Giant sons,
 Of the embrace of Angels with a sex
 More beautiful than they,¹⁴² which did draw down
 The erring Spirits who can neer return. – 105
 Most glorious Orb! that wer't a worship eer
 The mystery of thy making was revealed –
 Thou earliest minister of the Almighty
 Which gladdened on their mountain=tops the hearts
 Of the Chaldean Shepherds¹⁴³ till they poured 110
 Themselves in Orisons – thou material God!
 And representative of the Unknown –
 Who chose thee for his Shadow, – thou chief Star
 Centre of many Stars, which mak'st our earth
 Endurable, and temperest the hues 115
 And hearts of all who walk beneath thy rays –
 Sire of the Seasons! Monarch of the climes –
 And those who dwell in them – for near or far
 Our inborn Spirits have a tint of thee

may also be compared with the speech of Beleses about the setting sun, at *Sardanapalus* II i 1–36, and that of Myrrha about the rising sun at *Sardanapalus* V i 9–38.

142: See *Genesis* 6, 2 ... 4: ... *the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose ... There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.* This passage is in part the theme of B.'s 1821 drama *Heaven and Earth*.

143: *the Chaldean Shepherds*: compare *CHP* III, 14, 1–3:

*Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
 Till he had peopled them with beings bright
 As their own beams ...*

or 91, 1–6:

*Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places and the peak
 Of earth – o'er-gazing mountains, and thus make
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
 Upreared of human hands.*

E.H. Coleridge, and CPW, both refer to Herodotus' description of the Persian religion at *Histories*, Book I 131, and to Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, IV 671–6. Neither point out that the phrase *Chaldean Shepherds* (no-one believes the Chaldean astronomers to have been shepherds) is from *The Excursion*, IV 694.

Even as our outward Aspects, Thou dost rise – 120
 And shine and set in glory – Fare thee well!
 I neer shall see thee more, as my first Glance
 Of love and wonder was for thee – then take
 My latest look – thou wilt not beam on one
 To whom the Gifts of life & warmth have been 125
 Of a more fatal Nature. – He is gone –
 I follow.¹⁴⁴

(Exit Manfred)

Note + “That the Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair”, &^c: “There were Giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, – and they bare children to them – the same became mighty men, which were of old – men of renown. Genesis, Chapter 6th – verses 2^d. & 4th. –

144: B. to Murray, July 9 1817: *P.S. – Pray was Manfred’s speech to the Sun still retained in Act 3d? – I hope so – it was one of the best in the thing – & better than the Colosseum. – I have done 56 stanzas of Canto 4th. of Childe Harold – so down with your ducats.* (BLJ V 249)

Act III scene ii.

Scene 2^d.

(The Mountains – the Castle of Manfred at some distance –
a terrace before a tower¹⁴⁵ – time twilight. –

Herman – Manuel & other dependants of Manfred. – –)

Herman

'Tis strange enough – night after night for years
He hath pursued long vigil in this tower –
Without a witness. – I have been within it –
So have we all been oft=times – but from it
Or it's contents – it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute of aught
His studies tend to – to be sure there is
One chamber where none enter¹⁴⁶ – I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years
To pore upon it's mysteries. – –

5

Manuel

'Twere dangerous
Content thyself with what thou know'st already. –

10

Herman

Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and wise –
And couldst say much – thou hast dwelt within the castle –
How many years is't? –

145: *a terrace before a tower*: Manfred's presence in a tower – not subsequently referred to in the act as finally received – implies that B.'s model may at this stage have been the protagonist of William Beckford's *Vathek*: ... *having ascended, for the first time, the fifteen hundred steps of his tower, he cast his eyes below, and beheld men not larger than pismires; mountains, than shells; and cities, than beehives.* [Compare above, I ii 14–16.] *The idea, which such an elevation inspired of his own grandeur, completely bewildered him: he was almost ready to adore himself; till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars as high above him as they appeared when he stood on the surface of the earth. He consoled himself, however, for this intruding and unwelcome perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others; and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach of his sight, and extort from the stars the decrees of his destiny* (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, p.4). See also below, rejected section, ll.1–2n.

146: Professor Anne Barton often suggested (privately) that this is where Manfred keeps Astarte, as Norman Bates keeps his mother in *Psycho*.

Manuel

Ere Count Manfred's birth

I served his father – whom he nought resembles – 15

Herman

There be more sons in like predicament. –
But wherein do they differ?

Manuel

I speak not

Of features or of form – but mind and habits
Count Sigismund¹⁴⁷ was proud – but gay and free –
A Warrior and a reveller – he dwelt not 20
With books & solitude – nor made the night
A gloomy vigil – but a festal time,
Merrier than day – he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf – nor turn aside
From men and their delights. –¹⁴⁸

Herman

Beshrew the hour! 25

But those were jocund times – I would that such
Would visit the old walls again – they look
As if they had forgotten them. –

Manuel

These walls

Must change their chieftain first – Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in these four years. –

Herman

Come – be friendly – 30

Relate me some to wile away our watch.¹⁴⁹
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts by this same tower.

147: *Count Sigismund*: B. perhaps chooses the name because of King Sigismund of Burgundy (see above, III i 19n).

148: *Count Sigismund* sounds rather like Childe Harold before he became satiated.

149: *Relate me some to wile away our watch*: B. may subconsciously intend an echo of *Hamlet* I i; but why Manuel and Herman should be on watch at all, since Manfred is not at war with any earthly foe, is unclear.

Manuel

That was a night indeed. – – I do remember
 'Twas twilight as it may be now – and such 35
 Another evening – yon red cloud, which rests
 On Eigher's pinnacle – so rested then,
 So like that it might be the same – the wind
 Was faint and gusty – and the mountain snows
 Began to glitter with the climbing Moon. – 40
 Count Manfred was as now within his tower¹⁵⁰ –
 How occupied we knew not – but with him
 The sole companion of his wanderings
 And watchings – her whom of all earthly things
 That lived, the only thing he seemed to love – 45
 As he indeed by blood was bound to do –
 The Lady Astarte, his — —

Herman

Look – Look – the tower
The tower's a fire! – ¹⁵¹ Oh heavens & earth, what sound,
What dreadful sound is that?

(A Crash like Thunder.)

Manuel

Help – Help – there – to the rescue of the Count!
The Count's in danger – what – ho! there! approach! – [5]

(The servants – vassals – & peasantry
Approach – stupefied with terror. –)

150: For a possible echo of Rousseau's *Confessions* here, see note to corresponding line in the revised version.

151: Rejected lines 1–2: *Look – look – the tower! / The tower's on fire!*: Manfred's mysterious presence in a tower, and the conflagration which now ensues in the rejected scene, confirms that B.'s model was at this stage Beckford's *Vathek* (see also above, this scene, opening stage direction and n.): *In the mean time, the inhabitants of Samarah, scared at the light which shone over the city, arose in haste; ascended their roofs, beheld the tower on fire, and hurried, half naked, to the square. Their love for their sovereign immediately awoke; and, apprehending him in danger of perishing in his tower, their whole thoughts were occupied with the means of his safety (Vathek, ed. Lonsdale, p.33.)* There is no explanation in the original act for the accident – or fatal act – which occasions Manfred's death.

Manuel

*If there be any of you who have heart
And love of human kind – & will to aid
Those in distress – pause not – but follow me –
The portal's open, – follow –*

(Manuel goes in)

Herman

Come – who follows?

What none of ye? – ye recreants! shiver then [10]
Without. – I will not see old Manuel risk –
His few remaining years unaided. –

(Herman goes in)

A Vassal

Hark! –

No – all is silent – not a breath – the flame
Which shot forth such a blaze is also gone –
What may this mean? let's enter! – [15]

Peasant

Faith not I. –

Not but if one or two or more will join
I then will stay behind – but for my part –
I do not see precisely to what end. –

Vassal

Cease your vain prating – come –

Manuel speaking within

'Tis all in vain –

He's dead – quite stark –¹⁵²

Herman (within)

Not so – even now methought he moved – [20]
But it is dark – so – bear him gently out –
Softly – how cold he is! – take care of his temples

152: In the fair copy, “quite stark” is deleted.

In winding down the staircase –

(Re=enter Manuel & Herman bearing Manfred in their arms.)

Manuel

*Hie to the Castle some of ye – and bring
What aid you can – saddle the barb – & speed [25]
For the Leech to the city. – quick! – some water there! –*

Herman

*His cheek is black – but there is a faint beat
Still lingering about the heart – some water!*

(They sprinkle Manfred with water – after a pause he gives some signs of life. –)

Manuel

*He seems to strive to speak – come – cheerly Count!
He moves his lips – can 'st hear him? – I am old – [30]
And cannot catch faint sounds – –*

Herman (inclining his head & listening)

*I hear a word
Or two; – but indistinctly – what is next?
Whats to be done? let's bear him to the castle. –*

(Manfred motions with his hand not to remove him. –)

Manuel

*He disapproves – & 'twere of no avail –
He changes rapidly. –*

Herman

'Twill soon be over – [35]

Manuel

*Oh! what a death is this! that I should live
To shake my grey hairs over the last chief
Of the house of Sigismund – And such a death! –
Alone – we know not how – unshrived – untended,*

*With strange accompaniments – & fearful signs*¹⁵³ – [40]
I shudder at the sight, but must not leave him.

Manfred (speaking faintly and slowly)

Old Man! 'tis not so difficult to die. –

(Manfred having said this expires. – – –)

Herman

His eyes are fixed and lifeless. – He is gone. –

Manuel

Close them. – My old hand quivers. – He departs –
Whither? – I dread to think – but he is gone! [45]

End of Act third – & of the poem. – – – – –

153: *Alone – we know not how – unshrived – untended – / With strange accompaniments – and fearful signs:* compare the words of the Ghost at *Hamlet*, I v 77-9: *Unhouseled, disappointed, unanealed, / No reckoning made, but sent to my account / With all my imperfections on my head.*

Act Three (revised version):

Act III scene i.

Act third. – Scene first. –
(Scene – a Hall in the Castle of Manfred. –
Manfred – and Herman. –)

Manfred

What is the hour?

Herman

It wants but one till Sunset –
And promises a lovely twilight. –

Manfred

Say –
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed? –

Herman

All – my Lord – are ready –
Here is the key – & casket.¹⁵⁴ – – –

Manfred

It is well. 5
Thou may'st retire. –

(Exit Herman)

Manfred – alone –

There is a calm upon me,
Inexplicable stillness – which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life. –
If that I did not know Philosophy
To be of all our Vanities the Motliest – 10
The merest word that ever fooled the ear
From out the Schoolmen's jargon – I should deem

154: This casket may contain Ashtarothe (see this scene, ll.[49-51]); though how Manfred anticipates freeing her from it at this point is mysterious.

The golden secret the sought "Kalon"¹⁵⁵ found –
 And seated in my Soul. – It will not last
 But it is well to have known it – though but once; 15
 It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense
 And I within my tablets would note down¹⁵⁶
 That there is such a feeling. – Who is there?

(Re=enter Herman)

Herman

My Lord – the Abbot of S^t. Maurice¹⁵⁷ craves
 To greet your presence. ——— ——— ———¹⁵⁸

(Enter the Abbot of S^t. Maurice)

Abbot.

Peace be with Count Manfred! 20

Manfred

Thanks holy Father! – Welcome to these walls
 Thy presence honours them and blesseth those

155: *the sought "Kalon":* Greek *Καλόν*, the supremely good, the morally and aesthetically perfect: Manfred thinks he may have arrived at the moment equivalent to the one at which Faust agrees that Mephistopheles can claim his soul – when he may exclaim *Verweile doch, du bist so schön!* (*Faust*, Pt I, l.1700).

156: Compare *Hamlet* I v 107–8: *My tables! – meet it is I set it down / That one may smile ...*

157: *the Abbot of St. Maurice:* St. Maurice is in the Rhone valley, south-east of Chillon, half-way between Villeneuve and Martigny. The Augustinian priory there is the earliest Christian site in Switzerland, and was endowed in 515 A.D. by a Duke of Burgundy called Sigismund – the name B. gives (III iii 19) to Manfred's father. B. and Hobhouse passed it on October 6th 1816. Hobhouse recorded in his diary, *there is scarcely room for the little town of St Maurice which we thought must be let into the perpendicular rocks here running down to the bank of the river – Springhetti or Springenetti took us to a very decent inn where they gave me a very good dinner and Byron some tea – after I had gone to my room Byron called me out to the gallery to look at the rocks and the church and the snowy top of the dent du midi sleeping in the moonlight & apparently close to us like a scene in the theatre – the little church is in a rocky nook above the town – slept well.* (BL Add. Mss. 56537 28r.)

158: Herman's re-entrance and first speech are added to provide a link between the old and new sections of the act.

Who dwell within them. –

Abbot

Would it were so – Count –
But I would fain confer with thee alone. –

Manfred

Herman retire –

(Exit Herman)

– what would my reverend Guest? 25

Abbot

Thus without prelude – Age & Zeal – my office –
And good intent must plead my privilege –
Our near though not acquainted Neighbourhood
May also be my herald. – Rumours strange
And of unholy nature are abroad – 30
And busy with thy name – a noble name –
For centuries – may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpaired. – – –

Manfred

Proceed. – I listen.¹⁵⁹ –

Abbot

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man – 35
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes
The many evil and unheavenly Spirits
Which walk the valley of the Shade of Death,
Thou communest. – I know that with mankind
Thy fellows in creation thou dost rarely 40
Exchange thy thoughts – and that thy Solitude

159: Compare Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter II: *My lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions. I forgive your highness's uncharitable apostrophe: I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than Manfred. Harken to him who speaks through my organs. Manfred trembled with rage and shame.*

Is as an Anchorite's – were it but holy.

Manfred

And what are they who do avouch these things?

Abbot

My pious brethren – the scared peasantry –
Even thy own vassals – who do look on thee 45
With most unquiet eyes – thy life's in peril –

Manfred

Take it.

Abbot

I come to save and not destroy –
I would not pry into thy secret Soul –
But if these things be sooth – there still is time
For penitence and pity; reconcile thee 50
With the true church – & through the church to heaven.

Manfred

I hear thee. – This is my reply. – Whateer
I may have been or am doth rest between
Heaven and myself – I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. – Have I sinned 55
Against your ordinances? – prove and punish. –

Abbot

My Son! I did not speak of punishment; –
But patience & pardon; with thyself
The choice of such remains – & for the last
Our institutions and our strong belief 60
Have given me power to smooth the path from Sin
To higher hope & better thoughts; the first¹⁶⁰
I leave to heaven – “Vengeance is mine alone”¹⁶¹

160: Lines 57-62 are not in the fair copy, but on the proof.

161: “*vengeance is mine alone*” / *So saith the Lord*: Deuteronomy 32, 35: *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand.* Also Romans, 12, 19: *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

The Victim of a self inflicted wound
 To shun the torments of a public¹⁶⁴ death 90
 From Senates once his slaves: a certain Soldier
 With show of loyal pity would have staunch'd
 The gushing throat with his officious robe;
 The dying Roman thrust him back and said –
 Some Empire still in his expiring glance, – 95
 “It is too late – is this Fidelity?”

Abbot

And what of this?

Manfred

I answer with the Roman
 “It is too late!”

Abbot

It never can be so
 To reconcile thyself with thy own soul –
 And thy own soul within heaven. – Hast thou no hope? 100
 ’Tis strange – – even those who do despair above
 Yet shape themselves some phantasy on earth –
 To which frail twig they cling – like drowning men.

Manfred

Aye – Father! I have had those earthly visions

Life is the sixth chapter of his book, which starts with a life of Julius Caesar, who was not an emperor. See also *Don Juan* III st.109. Nero could be seen as an alter ego for Manfred: Pausanias (in Thomas Taylor’s translation – see above, II ii 93, commentary on B.’s note) writes thus of him: ... *Nero acted very impiously towards his mother, and behaved with a like cruelty towards his wives, which shewed that he was entirely destitute of Love* (III 60). He also portrays Nero as a sacrilegious investigator of mysteries: *I have seen ... the Alcyonian lake, through which ... Bacchus descended to Hades, in order to lead back Semele ... The depth of this lake is immense; nor do I know any man who has been able by any artifice whatever to reach its bottom: for even Nero, who joined ropes together of many stadia in length, and fastened lead at the end, with whatever else might be useful for this purpose, could never find the bottom ... It is however by no means lawful for me to divulge to all men the nocturnal ceremonies, which are performed every year by the side of this lake, to Bacchus* (ibid, I 246).

164: B. overlineates “not less of life but” and writes “<or> choose between these” in the margin, so that the line could be “To shun not less of life but public death”.

And noble aspirations in my youth¹⁶⁵ – 105
To make my own the Mind of other men –
The Enlightener of nations – and to rise
I knew not whither, – it might be to fall –
But fall even as the Mountain=cataract
Which having leapt from it's more dazzling height 110
Even in the foaming strength of it's abyss –
(Which casts up misty columns that become
Clouds raining from the re=ascended skies)
Lies low but mighty still. – But this is past –
My thoughts mistook themselves. – 115

Abbot

And wherefore so?

Manfred¹⁶⁶

I could not tame my Nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway – & soothe – & sue –

165: The dialogue about Manfred's youthful aspirations to leadership has obvious parallels with B.'s own half-hearted gestures towards political involvement in the Lords earlier in his career. One model for the Abbot may be Father Aucher, B.'s Armenian teacher on the Isola San Lazzaro, the avowed aim of whose brotherhood impressed both B. and Hobhouse when they visited the island on November 29 1816: *We all were highly delighted with the society, and shall not forget the answer given to us when we asked our monk what was the purpose of the establishment – "The illumination of our people"* (BL.Add.Mss. 56538 23 r.–v.). B., who stayed longer with the monks than did Hobhouse, probably realised that his version of *illumination* was not the same as theirs.

166: Compare *Coriolanus* III ii 110–23:

*Well, I must do it.
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe,
Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! The smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight! A beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my armed knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms! I will not do't:
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.*

And watch all time – & pry into all place –
 And be a living Lie – who would become
 A mighty thing amongst the mean – & such 120
 The Mass are; – I disdained to mingle with
 A herd though to be leader – & of Wolves. –
 The Lion is alone – & so am I. –

Abbot

And why not live & act with other men? –

Manfred

Because my Nature was averse from life – 125
 And yet not cruel – for I would not make
 But find a desolation: – like the Wind
 The red hot breath of the most lone Simoom¹⁶⁷
 Which dwells but in the desert – & sweeps oer
 The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast 130
 And revels oer their wild & arid waves –
 And seeketh not so that it is not sought
 But being met is deadly – such hath been
 The course of my existence – but there came
 Things in my path – which are no more. – 135

Abbot

Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
 From me & from my calling – yet so young
 I still would –

Manfred

Look on me! – there is an order

167: ... *the most lone Simoom*: compare *The Giaour*, 282:

*He came, he went, like the Simoom,
 That harbinger of fate and gloom,
 Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
 The very cypress droops to death ...*

or *Don Juan*, IV 456:

*The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
 Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.*

B.'s knowledge of the Simoom may have started with the huge note on it which Southey appended to Book Two of *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801).

Of mortals on the earth – who do become
Old in their youth – & die ere¹⁶⁸ middle age – 140
Without the violence of warlike death –
Some perishing of pleasure – some of study
Some worn with toil – and some with mere weariness –
Some of disease – & some Insanity
And some of withered – or of broken hearts – 145
For this last is a Malady, which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes – & bearing many names –
Look upon me! – for even of all these things
I have partaken – and of all these things 150
One were enough, – then wonder not that I
Am what I am – but that I ever was
Or having been – that I am still on earth. –

Abbot

Yet hear me still –

Manfred

Old Man! I do respect
Thine order – and revere thine years – I deem 155
Thy purpose pious – but it is in vain –
Think me not churlish – I would spare thyself
Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy – and so – farewell. –

(Exit Manfred. –)

Abbot Solus

This should have been a noble creature: – He 160
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements
Had they been wisely mingled; – as it is –
It is an awful Chaos – Light & Darkness –
And Mind and dust – & passions & pure thoughts 165
Mixed & contending without end or order –
All dormant or destructive;¹⁶⁹ he will perish –

168: B. intends “e’er”, but first writes “ere”, then erases it and rewrites it over the line.

And yet he must not; – I will try once more –
 For such are worth redemption – & my Duty
 Is to dare all things for a righteous end. – 170
 I'll follow him – but cautiously – though surely. –

(Exit Abbot.
 Scene closes –)

169: Echoes several Byronic meditations on mankind and on himself, most remarkably his reflections on Burns, in the Journal entry for December 13 1813 (BLJ III 239): *Allen ... has lent me a quantity of Burns's unpublished, and never-to-be-published, Letters. They are full of oaths and obscene songs. What an antithetical mind! – tenderness, roughness – delicacy, coarseness – sentiment, sensuality – soaring and grovelling – dirt and deity – all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay!* See also B. to Annabella Milbanke, September 26th 1814: *P.S.—I have just been going through a curious scenef.] Sir W. Knighton brought Spurtzheim (I believe is the name) the craniologist to see me—a discoverer of faculties & dispositions from heads.—He passes his hand over the head & then tells you—curious things enough—for I own he has a little astonished me.—He says all mine are strongly marked—but very antithetical for every thing developed in & on this same skull of mine has its opposite in great force so that to believe him my good & evil are at perpetual war—pray heaven the last don't come off victorious.—* (BLJ IV 180-2)

Act III scene ii.

Enter Herman.¹⁷⁰

My Lord – you bade me wait on you at Sunset –
He sinks behind the Mountain. –

Manfred

Doth he so?

I will look on him. –

(Manfred advances to the window of the Hall — —)

Glorious Orb! ¹⁷¹ – the Idol	!	100
Of early Nature, and the vigorous race		
Of undiseased mankind, the Giant sons,		
Of the embrace of Angels with a sex		
More beautiful than they, ¹⁷² which did draw down		
The erring Spirits who can neer return. –		105
Most glorious Orb! that wer't a worship eer		
The mystery of thy making was revealed –		
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty		
Which gladdened on their mountain–tops the hearts		
Of the Chaldean Shepherds ¹⁷³ till they poured		110

170: Lines 1-127 and the prose note duplicate those in the first version of the act, except that Herman enters rather than re-enters.

171: *Glorious Orb!*: this speech may owe something to the *Oration to the Sun* of Julian the Apostate, which had been translated by Thomas Taylor the Platonist. It may also be compared with the speech of Beleses about the setting sun, at *Sardanapalus* II i 1–36, and that of Myrrha about the rising sun at *Sardanapalus* V i 9–38.

172: See *Genesis* 6, 2 ... 4: ... *the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose ... There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.* This passage is in part the theme of B.'s 1821 drama *Heaven and Earth*.

173: *the Chaldean Shepherds*: compare *CHP* III, 14, 1–3:

*Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams ...*

or 91, 1–6:

Not vainly did the early Persian make

Themselves in Orisons – thou material God!
 And representative of the Unknown –
 Who chose thee for his Shadow, – thou chief Star
 Centre of many Stars, which mak'st our earth
 Endurable, and temperest the hues 115
 And hearts of all who walk beneath thy rays –
 Sire of the Seasons! Monarch of the climes –
 And those who dwell in them – for near or far
 Our inborn Spirits have a tint of thee
 Even as our outward Aspects, Thou dost rise – 120
 And shine and set in glory – Fare thee well!
 I neer shall see thee more, as my first Glance
 Of love and wonder was for thee – then take
 My latest look – thou wilt not beam on one
 To whom the Gifts of life & warmth have been 125
 Of a more fatal Nature. – He is gone –
 I follow.¹⁷⁴

(Exit Manfred)

Note + “That the *Sons of God* saw the daughters of men that they were fair”, &^c.: “There were Giants in the earth in those days, & also after that, when the *Sons of God* came in unto the daughters of men, – & they bare children to them – the same became mighty men, which were of old – men of renown. Genesis, Chapter 6th – verses 2^d. & 4th. –

*His altar the high places and the peak
 Of earth – o'er-gazing mountains, and thus make
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
 Upreared of human hands.*

E.H. Coleridge, and CPW, both refer to Herodotus' description of the Persian religion at *Histories*, Book I 131, and to Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, IV 671–6. Neither point out that the phrase *Chaldean Shepherds* (no-one believes the Chaldean astronomers to have been shepherds) is from *The Excursion*, IV 694.

174: B. to Murray, July 9 1817: *P.S. – Pray was Manfred's speech to the Sun still retained in Act 3d? – I hope so – it was one of the best in the thing – & better than the Colosseum. – I have done 56 stanzas of Canto 4th. of Childe Harold – so down with your ducats.* (BLJ V 249)

Act III scene iii.

Scene 2^d.

(The Mountains – the Castle of Manfred at some distance –
a terrace before a tower¹⁷⁵ – time twilight. –

Herman – Manuel & other dependants of Manfred. – –)

Herman

'Tis strange enough – night after night for years

He hath pursued long vigil in this tower –

Without a witness. – I have been within it –

So have we all been oftentimes – but from it

Or it's contents – it were impossible

5

To draw conclusions absolute of aught

His studies tend to – to be sure there is

One chamber where none enter – I would give

The fee of what I have to come these three years

To pore upon it's mysteries. – –

Manuel

'Twere dangerous

10

Content thyself with what thou know'st already. –

Herman

Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and wise –

And couldst say much – thou hast dwelt within the castle –

How many years is't? –

175: *a terrace before a tower:* Manfred's presence in a tower – not subsequently referred to in the act as finally received – implies that B.'s model may at this stage have been the protagonist of William Beckford's *Vathek*: ... *having ascended, for the first time, the fifteen hundred steps of his tower, he cast his eyes below, and beheld men not larger than pismires; mountains, than shells; and cities, than beehives.* [Compare above, I ii 14–16.] *The idea, which such an elevation inspired of his own grandeur, completely bewildered him: he was almost ready to adore himself; till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars as high above him as they appeared when he stood on the surface of the earth. He consoled himself, however, for this intruding and unwelcome perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others; and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach of his sight, and extort from the stars the decrees of his destiny* (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, p.4). See also below, rejected section, ll.1–2n.

Manuel

Ere Count Manfred's birth
I served his father – whom he nought resembles – 15

Herman

There be more sons in like predicament. –
But wherein do they differ?

Manuel

I speak not
Of features or of form – but mind and habits
Count Sigismund¹⁷⁶ was proud – but gay and free –
A Warrior and a reveller – he dwelt not 20
With books & solitude – nor made the night
A gloomy vigil – but a festal time,
Merrier than day – he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf – nor turn aside
From men and their delights. –¹⁷⁷

Herman

Beshrew the hour! 25
But those were jocund times – I would that such
Would visit the old walls again – they look
As if they had forgotten them. –

Manuel

These walls
Must change their chieftain first – Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in these four years. –

Herman

Come – be friendly – 30
Relate me some to wile away our watch.¹⁷⁸
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts by this same tower.

176: *Count Sigismund*: B. perhaps chooses the name because of King Sigismund of Burgundy (see above, III i 19n).

177: *Count Sigismund* sounds rather like Childe Harold before he became satiated.

178: *Relate me some to wile away our watch*: B. may subconsciously intend an echo of *Hamlet* I i; but why Manuel and Herman should be on watch at all, since Manfred is not at war with any earthly foe, is unclear.

Manuel

That was a night indeed. – – I do remember
'Twas twilight as it may be now – and such 35
Another evening – yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle – so rested then,
So like that it might be the same – the wind
Was faint and gusty – and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing Moon. – 40
Count Manfred was as now within his tower¹⁷⁹ –
How occupied we knew not – but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings – her whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seemed to love – 45
As he indeed by blood was bound to do –
The Lady Astarte, his — —
Hush – who comes here?¹⁸⁰

(Enter the Abbot.)¹⁸¹

179: *Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower – / How occupied we knew not:* B. may consciously or unconsciously be recollecting the following passage from Rousseau's *Confessions*, about the time when he was observing the stars through a telescope: *Un soir, des paysans passant assez tard me virent dans un grotesque Équipage occupé à mon opération. La lueur qui donnait sur mon planisphère, et dont ils ne voyaient pas la cause parce que la lumière était cachée à leurs yeux par les bords du seau, ces quatre picquets, ce grand papier barbouillée de figures, ce cadre, et le jeu de ma lunette, qu'ils voyaient aller et venir, donnaient à cet objet un air de grimoire qui les effraya. Ma parure n'était pas propre à les rassurer; un chapeau clabaud par-dessus mon bonnet. et un pet-en-l'air ouaté de Maman qu'elle m'avait obligé de mettre, offrait à leurs yeux l'image d'un vrai sorcier, et comme il était près de minuit, ils ne doutèrent point que ce ne fût le commencement du sabbat. Peu curieux d'en voir davantage, ils se sauvèrent très alarmé, éveillèrent leurs voisins pour leur conter leur vision, et l'histoire courut si bien, que dès le lendemain chacun sut dans le voisinage que le sabbat se tenait chez M. Noîray* (*Confessions*, Livre VI). A polite visit from two local Jesuits dispels the rumour.

180: "Hush – who comes here?" added in proof.

181: The need to restart the dialogue between Manfred and the Abbot, with a view to meeting Gifford's objections to the Abbot's having been portrayed in the original version as *an idiot*, is not handled by B. with any dramatic subtlety.

Abbot

Where is your Master? –

Herman

Yonder – in the tower. –

Abbot

I must speak with him –

Manuel

'Tis impossible –

He is most private – & must not be thus

Intruded on –

50

Abbot

Upon myself I take

The forfeit of my fault – if fault there be –¹⁸²

But I must see him –

Herman

Thou hast seen him once

This eve already.

Abbot

Sirrah! – I command thee –

Knock & apprize the Count of my approach –

55

Herman

We dare not. –

Abbot

Then it seems I must be herald

Of my own purpose –

Manuel

Reverend Father – stop –

I pray you pause –

182: B. writes and erases “The fault if fault there be”.

Abbot

Why so? –

Manuel

But step this way –

One moment – I will tell you further. ——

(Exeunt – Scene closes. –)

Act III scene iv.

Scene 4th.

Interior of the tower. –

Manfred alone.

The Stars are forth – the Moon above the tops
 Of the snowshining mountains – Beautiful!
 I linger yet with Nature – for the Night
 Hath been to me a more familiar face
 Than that of Man – & in her starry shade 5
 Of dim and solitary loveliness
 I learned the language of another world. –
 I do remember me – that in my youth
 When I was wandering; – upon such a Night
 I stood within the Colosseum's wall 10
 Midst the chief relics of Almighty Rome¹⁸³ –
 The trees which grew along the broken arches
 Waved dark in the blue Midnight – & the Stars
 Shone through the rents of Ruin – from afar
 The watchdog bayed beyond the Tiber – And – 15
 More near from out the Cæsar's palace came
 The Owl's long cry – and interruptedly
 Of distant Sentinels the fitful song –
 Begun and died upon the gentle wind. –
 Some Cypresses beyond the time-worn breach 20
 Appeared to skirt the horizon – yet they stood
 Within a bowshot – where the Cæsars dwelt
 And dwell the tuneless birds of Night amidst
 A Grove which springs through levelled battlements
 And twines it's roots with the Imperial hearths 25
 Ivy usurps the Laurel's place of growth –
 But the Gladiator's bloody Circus stands
 A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
 While Cæsar's chambers – and the Augustan halls

183: *I stood within the Colosseum's wall / Midst the chief relics of Almighty Rome:*
 B. was in Rome from April 29 to May 20 1817. It is in his first letter from there
 (May 5: BLJ V 219) that he announces to Murray the completion and dispatch of
 the revised third act of *Manfred* – which includes this scene. Compare *CHP* IV
 sts.128–31, which are part of the original draft, preceding the additions made in
 Venice at Hobhouse's suggestion.

Retire – or twill be dangerous – Away. —

55

Abbot

Thou dost not mean to menace me? –

Manfred

Not I –

I simply tell thee peril is at hand –

And would preserve thee. –

Abbot

What dost mean? –

Manfred

Look there!

What dost thou see?

Abbot

Nothing. –

Manfred

Look there I say –

And steadfastly – now tell me what thou seest?

60

Abbot

That which should shake me – but I fear it not –

I see a dusk and awful figure rise

Like an infernal god from out the Earth –

His face wrapt in a mantle – and his form

Robed as with angry clouds – he stands between

Thyself and me – but I do fear him not. –

65

Manfred

Thou hast no cause – he shall not harm thee – but

His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy –

I say to thee – Retire –

Abbot

And I reply –

Never – till I have battled with this fiend –

What doth he here?

70

Manfred

Why – aye – what doth he here?
I did not send for him¹⁸⁶ – he is unbidden. –

Abbot

Alas! lost Mortal! – what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake –
Why doth he gaze on thee and thou on him? 75
Ah! – he unveils his aspect – on his brow
The Thunder=scars are graven¹⁸⁷ – from his eye
Glares forth the Immortality of hell –
Avant! –

Manfred

Pronounce – what is thy mission?

186: Manfred's sudden change from delight at the Abbot's terror to the realisation that the Spirit was for once not one summoned by him constitutes one of the play's few comic moments. It is borrowed from Schiller's unfinished novel *Der Geisterseher*, in which a Sicilian charlatan exclaims, when an apparition appears unannounced in his spectacle, "Who is this among us? ... You were not the one I wanted". When B. wrote the April 2nd 1817 letter in which he refers to Schiller's novel (BLJ V 203), he had written the first version of *Manfred's* third act, but not the second, in which this line occurs.

187: *on his brow / The Thunder-scars are graven*: compare *The Vision of Judgement*, st.24:

*But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved –
His brow was like the Deep when tempest-tost –
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face –
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded Space.*

Or see *Paradise Lost*, I 599–606:

*Darkend so, yet shon
Above them all th'Arch-Angel: but his face
Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under Brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerat Pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signes of remorse and passion to behold
The fellows of his crime ...*

Spirit¹⁸⁸

Come!¹⁸⁹

Abbot

What art thou – unknown Being! answer – speak! –

80

Spirit

The Genius of this mortal – Come! – 'tis time. –

Manfred

I am prepared for all things – but deny

The power which summons me – Who sent thee here?

Spirit

Thou'lt know anon – Come – Come –

Manfred

I have commanded

Things of an essence greater far than thine

85

And striven with thy Masters. – Get thee hence!

Spirit

Mortal! thine hour has come – Away – I say. –

Manfred

I knew & know my hour is come¹⁹⁰ but not

To render up my Soul to such as thee –

Away – I'll die as I have lived – Alone. –

90

Spirit

Then I must summons up my brethren. Rise! –

(Other Spirits rise up.)

188: The identity of the Spirit is never made clear. Despite the echoes recorded in the notes, he is not unambiguously Satan, but a form, as he says at l.81, of Genius, similar perhaps to the one given Pope Julius II in Erasmus' dialogue *Iulius Exclusus*.

189: "Come!" is written in large letters in the fair copy.

190: *I knew and know my hour is come*: contrast Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter IV: *Manfred ... starting in an agony of terror and amazement, ... cried, Ha! what art thou, thou dreadful spectre! Is my hour come?*

Abbot

Avaunt! ye evil Ones! – Avaunt! I say –
Ye have no power where piety hath power –
And I do charge ye in the name –

Spirit

Old Man!

We know ourselves – our mission – and thine order – 95
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses
It were in vain – this Man is forfeited. –
Once more – I summons him – Away! – Away! –

Manfred

I do defy ye – though I feel my Soul
Is ebbing from me – yet I do defy ye 100
Nor will I hence while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye – earthly strength
To wrestle though with Spirits – what ye take
Shall be taen limb by limb. – – –

Spirit

Reluctant Mortal!

Is this the Magian who would so pervade 105
The world invisible? & make himself
Almost our Equal? – can it be that thou
Ar't thus in love with life? – the very life
Which made thee wretched? – –

Manfred

Thou false fiend! thou liest!

My life is in it's last hour – that I know 110
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour –
I do not combat against Death but thee –
And thy surrounding Angels – my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew –
But by superior science – penance – daring – 115
And length of watching – strength of mind – & skill
In knowledge of our Fathers – when the Earth –
Saw men & spirits walking side by side
And gave ye no Supremacy; – I stand
Upon my Strength – I do defy – deny – 120

Spurn back – & scorn ye!¹⁹¹ –

Spirit

But thy many Crimes
Have made thee — —

Manfred

What are they to such as thee?
Must Crimes be punished but by other Crimes?
And greater Criminals? Back to thy hell! –
Thou hast no power upon me – that I feel – 125
Thou never shalt possess me – that I know. – –
What I have done is done¹⁹² – I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine –
The Mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for it's good or evil thoughts – 130
Is it's own origin of Ill & End –
And it's own place & time¹⁹³ – it's innate Sense
When stripped of this Mortality derives
No colour from the fleeting things without –
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy 135
Born from the knowledge of it's own desert. –
Thou didst not tempt me – and thou couldst not tempt me –
I have not been thy dupe – nor am thy prey –
But was my own destroyer – and will be –
My own Hereafter.¹⁹⁴ – – Back ye baffled fiends! 140
The hand of Death is on me¹⁹⁵ – but not Yours! –

191: Manfred's tone here derives from that of Beckford's *Vathek*: *Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions: thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal, as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood, to acquire a power, which will make thy equals tremble: deem not that I shall retire, when in view of the port; or, that I will relinquish her, who is dearer to me than either my life, or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! Let him illumine my career! it matters not where it may end.* (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, p.105.)

192: *What I have done is done*: compare *Macbeth*, V i 66: *What's done cannot be undone ...*

193: Compare *Paradise Lost* I 254–5: *The mind is its own place, and in it self / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.*

194: *I ... was my own destroyer and will be / My own hereafter*: compare *Epistle to Augusta*, 23–4: *I have been cunning in mine overthrow / The careful pilot of my proper woe.*

(The Demons disappear. –)

Abbot

Alas! how pale thou art – thy lips are white –
And thy breast heaves – and in thy gasping throat –
The accents rattle – give thy prayers to heaven –
Pray – albeit but in thought, – but die not thus.

Manfred

'Tis over. – My dull eyes can fix thee not – 145
But all things swim around me – and the Earth
Heaves as it were beneath me – Fare thee well –
Give me thy hand. – – –

Abbot

Cold – Cold – even to the heart¹⁹⁶ –
But yet one prayer – Alas! how fares it with thee? 150

Manfred

Old Man! 'tis not so difficult to die.¹⁹⁷ –

195: *The hand of death is on me:* compare *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV ix 28: *The hand of death hath raught him.*

196: *Cold – Cold – even to the heart:* compare *Othello*, V iii 278: *Cold, cold, my girl! / Even like thy chastity.*

197: “Three or four times he was bedewed with profuse sweats; and these again were succeeded by an extreme dryness and burning heat of the skin. He was next covered with small livid spots: symptoms of shivering followed, but these he drove away with a determined resolution. He then became tranquil and composed, and, after some time, decided to go to bed, it being already night. ‘Falkland,’ said he, pressing his hand, ‘the task of dying is not so difficult as some imagine. When one looks back from the brink of it, one wonders that so total a subversion can take place at so easy a price.’ (Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, Bk. I Chap. V). When B. received the first edition he was furious, because *Manfred*’s final line had been cut. On August 12 1817 he wrote to Murray: ... *You have destroyed the whole effect & moral of the poem by omitting the last line of Manfred’s speaking – & why this was done I know not* (BLJ V 257). On September 9 Murray wrote back: ... *Mr Gifford after consulting me omitted your close of the drama from no other motive than because he thought the words you allude too [sic] – lessened the effect – & I was convinced of this myself – and the omission to send a copy to you earlier was merely that having no direct opportunity it did not occur to me to send it by post & upon my honour the alteration was so trivial in my mind that I forgot the importance which it might have in the eye of an author – I have written up this day to have the page cancelled and your reading restored – In future I propose to send*

(Manfred expires. –)

Abbot

He's gone. – his Soul hath taen it's earthless flight –
Whither?¹⁹⁸ – I dread to think – but he is gone.

*End of Act third –
& of this poem. – – –*

you every proof by post – with any suggestions of Mr G[ifford] upon them for your approbation (John Murray Archive / National Library of Scotland: LJM 241).

198: An answer to the Abbot's worry may lie in the introduction to a monograph by Thomas Taylor, *A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, published early in 1816 (it had first appeared as a book in 1790) in a number of *The Pamphleteer* which also contained an essay called *On the Punishment of Death* by John William Polidori, B.'s doctor and travelling companion: ... *I now proceed to prove that the shews of the lesser mysteries were designed by the ancient theologists, their founders, to signify occultly the condition of the impure soul invested with a terrene body, and merged in a material nature: or, in other words, to signify that such a soul in the present life might be said to die, as far as it is possible for soul to die; and that on the dissolution of the present body, while in a state of impurity, it would experience a death still more durable and profound.* (*The Pamphleteer*, Vol. VIII p.36) Manfred's soul, being radically impure, may perhaps anticipate a similar fate.

MANFRED AND THOMAS TAYLOR

On June 7th 1820 Byron wrote to Murray:

His Faust I never read – for I don’t know German – but Matthew Monk Lewis {in 1816 at Coligny} translated most of it to me viva voce – & I was naturally {much} struck with it; – but it was the Staubach & the Jungfrau – and something else – much more than Faustus that made me write Manfred. – – The first Scene however & that of Faustus are very similar. –
_1

Commentators have spilt little ink over speculation as to why Byron starts by referring here to *Faust*, and ends by referring to *Faustus*, and much more over speculation as to what “and something else” may refer to: was it the influence of Shelley’s idealism? of Shelley’s *Alastor*? Byron’s affair with Augusta, and / or his despair at his exile? I should like to offer another possibility: that “something else” refers to the passing influence on Byron of Thomas Taylor.

Byron to Hobhouse, from Brussels, May 1st 1816:

Will you bring out παζανιας (Taylor’s ditto) when you come ²

Byron to Hobhouse, from Evian, June 23rd 1816:

Bring with you also for me – some bottles of Calcined Magnesia – a new Sword cane – procured by Jackson – he alone knows the sort – (my last tumbled into this lake –) some of Waite’s red tooth=powder – & tooth=brushes – a Taylor’s Pawrsanias – and – I forget the other things. – –
_3

The elaborate deception (or philosophical implication) whereby the need for Taylor’s Pausanias gets thrown in at the end of a list which includes indigestion– and tooth–powder, is typically Byronic, and one can imagine Hobhouse raising an eyebrow. But he did bring the book to

1: B. to Murray, June 7th 1820 (text from NLS Ms.43490; BLJ VII 113).

2: B. to Hobhouse, May 1st 1816 (text from NLS Ms.43439; BLJ V 74).

3: B. to Hobhouse, June 23rd 1816 (text from NLS Ms.43439; BLJ V 80).

Switzerland, as well as the other items. In a letter from him to Byron dated July 9th he spells the name “Praftsanias”, and adds “pistol brushes, cundums” and “potash” to the list of requisites – probably decoding a previous phrase in Byron’s letter: “all appliances and means to boot”.

Thomas Taylor was born in 1758 and died in 1835. Not an university man, he was one of the greatest classicists of his day, and a convinced Neo-Platonist: “Taylor the Pagan” was what Southey called him.⁴ His lack of belief in Christianity prevented him from becoming a university academic, and he lived for much of his life in poverty, but eventually found rich friends and patrons, who eased his circumstances. He translated, along with much else, all of Plato (published 1804: in fact his work consisted of revising the translations of Floyer Sydenham, and doing the rest himself) and all of Aristotle (1806-12). About the house, he and his wife used to converse in Ancient Greek. He knew Peacock, the Smith brothers (of *Rejected Addresses*) and Barry Cornwall. William Blake knew him and his writings very well. Mary Wollstonecraft was once his lodger.⁵ True to his Platonism, he was no democrat:

... there are five habits of the soul with respect to all knowledge; viz. *two-fold ignorance, simple ignorance, desire, search, and invention* and the multitude are under the dominion of the two first of these habits, as they are either even *ignorant of their ignorance*, or at most are sensible of it without any *desire* to become wise.⁶

It was probably this profound conservatism which enabled him to work freely in the way that he did. His translation of Pausanias, published in 1794, the only work of his with which we know Byron to have been acquainted,⁷ took ten months, and such was the exertion he put into it that he was deprived for ever afterwards of the use of his forefinger in writing.

Byron refers to one of his notes (which are designed “to prevent the knowledge of the ancient theology from being entirely lost”)⁸ in the deleted part of one of his own notes to the rough draft of *Manfred* (deleted words in pointed brackets):

4: Letter to Mrs Southey, 15/5/99; *New Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. Kenneth Curry (Columbia 1965) I 188.

5: Raine and Harper, *Thomas Taylor the Platonist* (Routledge 1969) pp.3–48 and 105–43.

6: *The Description of Greece by Pausanias*, 1794, henceforth “Taylor’s Pausanias”, III 358: *invention* should, in the light of Taylor’s subsequent phraseology, read *inspection*.

7: See CMP 168, and BLJ V 74 and 80, quoted above.

8: Taylor’s Pausanias I xii.

+ the Philosopher Iamblichus – the story of the raising of Eros & Anteros may be found in his *Life* by Eunapius – <or quoted in the notes to Taylor's *Pausanias*> –⁹

This refers to II ii 90–5 (*Manfred* addresses the Witch of the Alps):

I made
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity:
Such as before me did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain=dwellings raised
Eros & Anteros at Gadara,
As I do thee ...

Inspection of Taylor's note reveals the following:

The demon Anteros. Of this power, who avenges the injuries of lovers, the following remarkable story is told by Eunapius in his *Life* of Jamblichus: "This philosopher went with his disciples to Gadara in Syria, a place so famous for baths, that after Baiæ in Campania it is the second in the Roman empire. Here a dispute about baths arising while they were bathing, Jamblichus smiling said to them: 'Though what I am to disclose is not pious, yet for your sakes it shall be undertaken;' and at the same time he ordered his disciples to enquire of the natives, what appellations had been formerly given to two of the hot fountains, which were indeed less than the others, but more elegant. Upon enquiry, they found themselves unable to discover the cause of their nomination; but were informed that the one was called *Eros* or *Love*, and the other *Anteros*, or *the god who avenges the injuries of lovers*. Jamblichus immediately touching the water with his hand (for he sat, perhaps, on the margin of the fountain), and murmuring a few words, raised from the bottom of the fountain a fair boy, of a moderate stature, whose hair seemd to be tinged with gold, and the upper part of whose breast was of a luminous appearance. His companions being astonished at the novelty of the affair, Let us pass on, says he, to the next fountain; and at the same time he arose, fixed in thought, and, performing the same ceremonies as before, called forth the other Love, who was in all respects similar to the former, except that his hair scattered in his neck was blacker, and was like the sun in refulgence. At the same time, both boys eagerly embraced Jamblichus, as if he had been their natural parent: but he immediately restored them to their proper seats, and, when he had washed, departed from the place." Let the reader, however, be

9: Byron, *Manfred*, rough draft, bottom of Sheet 11 sides 2 and 3, Pierpont Morgan Library New York. Printed at *MSYR, Byron I* (Garland 1986) pp.66-7. James Twitchell, in *The Supernatural Structure of Byron's Manfred* (SEL 1975), adduces Taylor and NeoPlatonism as an influence on *Manfred*.

careful to remember, that though *Eros* and *Anteros* are gods according to their first subsistence, yet these which are mentioned by Eunapius were of the dæmoniacal order; and were perhaps dæmons only *καλα σχεσιν*, according to habitude, and alliance.¹⁰

Byron seems not to have wanted readers to know of his reliance on Taylor for the myth, and to have preferred them to think that he had read the original *Life* by Eunapius – which we may doubt: hence his erasure of the reference. He was sufficiently struck by the idea of the complementary boys to make use of them six years later, as the two pages Huon and Memnon, summoned by The Stranger at *The Deformed Transformed*, I i 518-32.

Iamblichus – evidently, from the ease and familiarity with which he summons demons, an alter ego for Manfred – was a Syrian philosopher who is thought to have died in 330. He developed the more purely intellectual neo-Platonism of Porphyry and Plotinus by systematising the view of the spirit world implicit in their work: in effect, creating a theology from it. The theo-demonology, if one may so style it, of much of *Manfred* Acts I and II, adheres closely to his, as this further note from Taylor's Pausanias shows:

The following Platonic dogma, which belongs to the greatest arcana of ancient Wisdom, solves all that appears to be so absurd and ridiculous to the atheistical and superficial in such-like historical relations as the present. Every deity beginning from on high, produces his own proper series to the last of things; and this series comprehends in itself many essences differing from each other. Thus, for instance, the Sun produces *Angelical*, *Dæmoniacal*, *Heroical*, *Nymphical*, *Panical*, and such-like powers, each of which subsists according to a solar characteristic: and the same reasoning must be applied to every other divinity. All these powers are the perpetual attendants of the Gods, but they have not all of them an essence *wholly* superior to man. For after *essential* Heroes an order of souls follows, who proximately govern the affairs of men, and are dæmoniacal *κατα σχεσιν*, according to habitude or alliance, but not essentially. Of this kind are the Nymphs that sympathize with waters, Pans with the feet of goats, and the like: and they differ from those powers that are essentially of a dæmoniacal characteristic, in this, that they assume a variety of shapes (each of the others immutably preserving one form), are subject to various passions, and are the causes of all-various deception to mankind.¹¹

10: Taylor's Pausanias, III 251-2: *καλα* should read *κατα*.

11: Taylor's Pausanias, III 235.

On the highest level of this Pantheon is the Demiurgus, Zeus, the Creator, “the over-ruling Infinite – the Maker”, as Manfred calls him at II iv 47: he is Intellect, above earthly things, and incorporeal (one of the “Powers deeper still beyond” to which Manfred refers at II iv 76). He may be confused with the Sun, to whom Manfred addresses his speech in III ii. Taylor also translated and published an *Oration to the Sun* of the Emperor Julian, who admired Iamblichus.

Next comes a kind of trinity of mixed supra-mundane and mundane deities – “Angelical Powers” – represented in the play by Arimanes, Nemesis and the three Destinies. Byron does not want to be thought of as too whole-hearted a neo-Platonist (“I am no Platonist, I am nothing at all” he had written to Francis Hodgson in 1811):¹² so, to confuse, he gives them names and titles from Zoroastrian dualism and classical European myth. They are Soul, but may interfere materially in earthly matters – see their speeches in II iii.

Lastly is a hierarchy of demons – not automatically to be understood as malign – “Nymphical, Panical, and such-like powers”: the Seven Spirits in I i, the Voices in the Incantation (perhaps those of the Seven) and the Witch of the Alps in I ii, who implies at II ii 45–6 that the Seven Spirits have more power than she. Given that Manfred converses with these as their equal, if not master, he may be said to be one of them: “... they have not all of them an essence wholly superior to man”. So may Astarte, who has to answer the call of Nemesis at II iv 84–97, although Nemesis cannot force her to speak. The name “Astarte” adds still more confusion to the multiplicity of creeds from which Byron is borrowing, for it comes not from Zoroastrianism (despite the evidence of Montesquieu, *Lettre Persane*, 67) nor from the Greek classics, still less from neo-Platonism, but, via Milton, *Paradise Lost* I 439, from near-Eastern fertility myth. Here she is not at all remote, as in the play, but is a fertility goddess (“the divine mistress of Adonis”)¹³ along with Semiramis (*Don Juan* V 60, 8) and Pasiphae (*Don Juan* II 155, 7). Astarte and Manfred may be of the race of “essential Heroes” to whom Taylor refers, overlapping with demons in the neo-Platonic hierarchy.

The question is, what or who, suddenly, in Brussels – within a week of his embarking for the continent – well before he met Shelley – awakened Byron’s interest in Taylor, Pausanias, and Neo-Platonism? – and the unexpected answer may be, Polidori. An essay by Polidori, called *On the Punishment of Death*, appeared early in 1816 in Number VIII of *The*

12: BLJ II 89.

13: Fraser, *The Golden Bough* (Macmillan 1987) p.346.

Pamphleteer. It is a rationally-argued piece against the English death penalty: one can readily imagine Polidori showing it to Byron with pride, and Byron, out of politeness, reading it. However, the periodical also contains the first half of a monograph by Taylor, called *A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*. This had first appeared as a book in 1790, and is conceived in part as a criticism of Warburton's attempt, in *The Divine Legation of Moses*, to prove that pre-Christian polytheism, in supposing an afterlife of punishment or reward, foreshadowed, however inadequately, the real Christian thing. Byron, who subsequently wrote of Warburton that he was "as fit to edit Poetry as Pope to preach in Gloucester Cathedral"¹⁴ would have read with pleasure Taylor's words:

... from hence the reader will easily perceive the extreme ridiculousness of Dr. Warburton's system, that the grand secret of the mysteries consisted in exposing the errors of Polytheism, and in teaching the doctrine of the unity, or the existence of one deity alone. For he might as well have said, that the great secret consisted in teaching a man how, by writing notes on the works of a poet, he might become a *bishop*! But it is by no means wonderful that men who have not the smallest conception of the true nature of the gods; who have persuaded themselves that they were only dead men deified; and who measure the understanding of the ancients by their own, should be led to fabricate a system so improbable and absurd.¹⁵

Byron's joke about Warburton parallels Taylor's. Taylor counters Warburton's dogmatism with his own brand of the same thing, albeit from a more embattled standpoint; but the substance of his argument would have interested Byron, and, I think, a version of it gets at least into Acts I and II of *Manfred*. The thesis is (roughly) that Aeneas' descent into Hades in Book VI of the *Aeneid* is a metaphor for the Soul entering the prison-house of the Flesh, and that the mysteries, glimpses of which are afforded by Plato, Pausanias, Virgil himself, Apuleius in the Cupid and Psyche sections of *The Golden Ass*, and Lucian in *Kataplous*, are ceremonies designed to release the Soul ("The Mind, the Spirit, the Promethean Spark" – *Manfred*, I i 154) from the Body's restraint, from the "clay" in which it is "cooped" (*Manfred*, I i 157). When Manfred refers to himself as "My own Soul's Sepulchre" (I ii 27) he is quoting Plato via Taylor's essay:

14: BLJ VIII 201.

15: *The Pamphleteer*, VIII, p.57: printed Raine and Harper, op.cit., p.374.

Plato, too, it is well known, considered the body as the sepulchre of the soul ...¹⁶

Taylor's introduction reads in part:

... I now proceed to prove that the shews of the lesser mysteries were designed by the ancient theologists, their founders, to signify occultly the condition of the impure soul invested with a terrene body, and merged in a material nature: or, in other words, to signify that such a soul in the present life might be said to die, as far as it is possible for soul to die; and that on the dissolution of the present body, while in a state of impurity, it would experience a death still more durable and profound.¹⁷

Manfred's soul, being radically impure, may perhaps anticipate a similar fate. We may imagine the motives of the ideal initiates of the Bacchic and Eleusinian mysteries to have been humble and spiritual, and to have led to their wishing to pass on the lessons of Dionysos, or of Platonism, to others. But Manfred's motives – though stemming from his boyhood delight in the elements (II ii 61–75) now appear self-centred, arrogant, and concerned with his own superior status over other humans, and over spirits. They never involve his becoming a Magus or Promethean teacher – unlike Iamblichus, his self-comparison with whom is thus contextualised as blasphemous. Here, whatever Byron's protestations, the influence of Goethe's *Faust* seem clear, for there the protagonist's search for wisdom is also motivated impurely. Neither Manfred nor Faust possesses academic humility, or the religious awe which ought to stem from it. That Manfred can still experience awe and humility is a major point in his favour; but he experiences them only before the things over which his studies have given him no power – the eagle at I ii 30, the waterfall at the start of II i, or the sun at the start of III ii.

Two further points in the action of *Manfred* appear to derive from Byron's reading of Taylor's Pausanias: when Manfred "falls senseless" at the sight of the "beautiful female figure" which the Spirits conjure for him at the end of I i, he may be reacting, not to a vision of Astarte, as commentators often suspect, but as any mortal would – according to Taylor's notes – upon seeing a divine vision:

The gods when they appear, diffuse a light of so subtle a nature, that the corporeal eyes are not able to bear it; but are affected in the same

16: *On the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (*The Pamphleteer*, VIII 1816 p.37: printed Raine and Harper, op.cit., p.348).

17: *The Pamphleteer*, VIII p.36: printed Raine and Harper, op.cit., p.347.

manner as fishes when they are drawn out of turbid and thick water into attenuated and diaphanous air. For men who behold a divine fire, as soon as they perceive it are scarcely able to breathe, and their connate spirit becomes inclosed in the fire.¹⁸

Manfred's ritual action in adjuring the Witch of the Alps at the start of II ii, by taking some water in the palm of his hand and flinging it into the air, may have been suggested by the following note:

... the oracle in Colophon gives its answers through the medium of water: for there is a fountain in a subterranean dwelling, from which the prophetess drinks; and on certain established nights, after many sacred rites have been previously performed, and she has drunk of the fountain, she delivers oracles, but is not visible to those that are present ... the water itself ... prepares us, and purifies our luciform spirit, so that we may be able to receive the divinity; while in the mean time there is a presence of divinity prior to this, and illuminating from on high –¹⁹

When the Witch of the Alps “rises beneath the arch of the Sun–bow of the torrent”, and is addressed by Manfred as

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light –
And dazzling eyes of Glory ... (II ii 13–14)

Byron is cross–fertilising his own experience at the Staubbach falls²⁰ with the following complacent note from Taylor:

In my Dissertation on the Eleusinian Mysteries, I have demonstratively shown that the most sublime part of *εποπλεια*, or *inspection*, in these mysteries consisted in beholding the gods themselves invested with a resplendent light.²¹

Two other alter egos Manfred mentions, details of whose careers Byron would also have learned from Taylor's Pausanias, are Nero, and the Spartan general who is also confusingly named Pausanias. Manfred's reference to the death of Nero (styled inaccurately “Rome's sixth Emperor” – III i 88) is derived, rather muddily, from Suetonius; but Pausanias also refers to him:

18: Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, p.70, quoted Taylor's Pausanias, III 361–2.

19: Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, p.72ff, quoted Taylor's Pausanias, III 353.

20: See BLJ V 101.

21: Taylor's Pausanias, III 327.

... Nero acted very impiously towards his mother, and behaved with a like cruelty towards his wives, which shewed that he was entirely destitute of Love.²²

He also portrays Nero as a sacrilegious investigator of the very mysteries about which Taylor, centuries later, writes:

I have seen ... the Alcyonian lake, through which ... Bacchus descended to Hades, in order to lead back Semele ... The depth of this lake is immense; nor do I know any man who has been able by any artifice whatever to reach its bottom: for even Nero, who joined ropes together of many stadia in length, and fastened lead at the end, with whatever else might be useful for this purpose, could never find the bottom ... It is however by no means lawful for me to divulge to all men the nocturnal ceremonies, which are performed every year by the side of this lake, to Bacchus.²³

Manfred is certainly destitute of all human love except the forbidden sort, and his motives for investigating mysteries are, in their self-centredness and power-fixation, not far from those of Nero. Manfred, as Nero did, misses the main point about mysteries, which is not blasphemously to try and master them, but to serve at them. Few critics have pointed out the irony whereby, in II iv, Manfred's self-denial and – mastery in the interests of plumbing the mysteries are praised by a host of nihilistic and destructive demons.

It is in his lines on the guilt of Pausanias the Spartan over the death of Cleonice (Manfred's soliloquy, II ii 185–92) that Byron lets slip in another phrase his indebtedness to Taylor:

The Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine Maid's unsleeping Spirit
An answer and his destiny – he slew
That which he loved unknowing what he slew
And died unpardoned – though he called in aid
The Phyxian Jove and in Phygalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant Shadow to depose her wrath
Or fix her term of vengeance – she replied
In words of dubious import but fulfilled. –

22: Taylor's Pausanias, III 60.

23: Taylor's Pausanias, I 246.

The pedantic style in which Manfred momentarily speaks here betrays the borrowing:

This was the deed, from the guilt of which Pausanias could never fly, though he employed all-various purifications, received the deprecations of Jupiter Phyxius, and went to Phigalea to the Arcadian evocators of souls. He therefore suffered a just punishment for his behaviour towards Cleonice, and divinity itself.²⁴

Taylor's scholarship was characterised by a frank distaste for Christianity,²⁵ astonishing for the time, and, I would suspect, attractive to Byron, although he would not find much sympathy with Taylor's alternative dogmatism:

Before the extinction of the genuine religion of mankind, indeed, and the introduction of *gigantic impiety*, it must have been highly improper to unfold these [the Eleusinian] mysteries to all men: but when *delusive faith* succeeded to *scientific theology*, and *divine* mystery was no more, it then became necessary to reveal this most holy and august institution. This appears to have been done by the latter Platonists: and from some important passages which fortunately yet remain in the manuscript Commentaries of these great men on Plato, I have been enabled to unfold the leading particulars of this interesting affair. These particulars the reader may find in my *Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*.²⁶

One of the last works Byron read before embarking on the composition

24: Taylor's Pausanias, I 304–5. This allusion is picked up by E.H. Coleridge in the notes to his edition of *Manfred* (see *The Works of Lord Byron: Poetry*, IV 109n).

25: See this passage, which is in the 1790 printing of Taylor's *Eleusinian Mysteries* but not in *The Pamphleteer*, and thus not available to B.: "... the sophistry throughout his [Warburton's] whole treatise is perpetual, and every where exhibits to our view the leading features of a Christian priest in complete perfection; I mean consummate arrogance united with a profound ignorance of antient wisdom and blended with matchless hypocrisy and fraud. For, indeed, from the earliest of the fathers down to the most modern and vile plebeian teacher among the Methodists, the same character displays itself and is alike productive of the same deplorable mischief to the real welfare of mankind. But it is necessary that impiety should sometimes prevail upon the earth; though at the same time, it is no less necessary that its consequent maladies should be lamented and strenuously resisted by every genuine lover of virtue and truth." (*A Dissertation on the Bacchic and Eleusinian Mysteries*, 1790, p.64: printed Raine and Harper, op.cit., p.374.)

26: Taylor's Pausanias, III 226–7.

of *Manfred* may indeed have been Taylor's *Dissertation*. He may have been contemplating writing a work about the relationship between humanity and the spirit world as early as May 1st 1816 – his first letter requesting a copy of Taylor's Pausanias is dated then, less than a week after he left England for ever on April 25th. This would put the genesis of the main dramatic part of *Manfred* close to that of the third Canto of *Childe Harold*, the early sketches of which also date from then.²⁷ Byron would have been impressed by a writer who asserted as boldly as Taylor did that the relationship was often on a much more equal and intimate footing than established Christianity would have it be. In giving his protagonist a blasphemous arrogance of which Taylor would never have approved, he went his own way, as ever: and by the time he wrote, and then, under the influence of established Christians, re-wrote the third act, in 1817,²⁸ it seems that the influence of Taylor had been forgotten.

The story may not end there. Two letters of Shelley to Charles Ollier, written in 1817, perhaps indicate a sequel to Byron's indebtedness to Taylor:

Be so good as to send me "Tasso's Lament" a Poem just published; & Taylors Translation of Pausanias. You will oblige me by sending them without delay, as I have immediate need for them. —²⁹

Do you know is Taylors Pausanias to be procured & at what price. —³⁰

It has been suggested³¹ that Taylor's work on the later neo-Platonist Proclus may form one subtext to *Prometheus Unbound*, which Shelley did not start until September 1818, but which contains several lines corresponding to, and answering ideas from, *Manfred*.³² This is apt, for it seems clear that *Manfred* had been, in addition to everything else, a creative riposte to *Alastor* – but that is the subject for another essay.

27: See CPW II 297. The Incantation in I i may date from two years earlier: see Jerome McGann's analysis of the manuscript papers at CPW IV 464.

28: See Cochran, John Murray, William Gifford and the Third Act of *Manfred*, *Notes and Queries* September 1991, pp.308–10.

29: Letter of July 24th 1817, *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Jones, Oxford 1964, I 548. 31: P.S. to a letter of August 3rd 1817, Jones. op.cit., I 548.

30: Ibid., 549.

31: Carl Grabo, "*Prometheus Unbound*": an Interpretation, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1935, quoted Robinson, *The Snake and the Eagle Wreathed In Fight*, Johns Hopkins 1976, p.258 n15

32: See Robinson, op.cit., pp.125–34&nn.

MANFRED AND ZOROASTRIANISM

We may guess, from the numerous parallels between the text of the play and the Alpine Journal, that parts of Acts I and II of *Manfred* date from just after the mountain tour, which Byron undertook with Hobhouse between September 17th and 29th 1816 (having received his copy of Taylor's Pausanias, and having jettisoned Polidori). But it is not clear that all of Act II was drafted in Switzerland; and it is possible that the idea of bringing in the Zoroastrian Arimanes, "on his throne, a globe of fire, surrounded by spirits" emerged later. Arimanes does not appear until II iv, which contains no mountain imagery: one immediate source for depicting him thus throned is Beckford's *Vathek* (see sections below, on *Vathek* and *Faust*); but a more important source may have been Byron's revived interest in Zoroastrianism.

There are semi-facetious references to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism in letters to Hobhouse and Hodgson in 1810 and 1811;¹ but in later years Byron looked more closely at the ancient Persian religion. He was to use it covertly in *Cain* (see II ii 403-5) and appears finally to reject it at *Don Juan* XIII, 41, 325-6. A more detailed interest in it may date from his reading of Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, which Murray sent him in manuscript in July 1814² and which was in that part of his library auctioned off in 1816.³ It was from these volumes that he may have derived some (though not all) of his information about the eighteenth-century tyrant Nadir Shah, whom he mentions at *Don Juan* IX Stanza 33. Malcolm has a section on Zoroaster, which starts with the following:

In giving a short abstract of the religion of Zoroaster, which has been very fully treated by several European authors, I shall pass over the dreams of Daghda which foretold the greatness of Zoroaster, while yet in the womb; as well as the journey of the prophet to heaven, where he received, from Hormuzd, the holy volume of the Zend-a-vesta, and the sacred fire; and his visit to hell, where he beheld Ahriman, or the evil spirit, release a man in whom he perceived some good, and threaten Satan, in his own regions, with shame and ignominy: nor shall I dwell upon his retirement to

1: BLJ II 26 and 89.

2: BLJ 147-8 and nn.

3: CMP 243.

the mountain of Elburz, and his solitary devotion in a deep cave, adorned by mystical figures of the elements, the seasons, and the celestial bodies: nor upon the various miracles which he performed to establish the truth of his religion ...

God, he taught, existed from all eternity, and was like infinity of time and space. There were, he averred, two principles in the universe, – good and evil: the one was termed Hormuzd, which denoted the presiding agent of all that was good; and the other, Ahriman, the lord of evil. Each of these had power of creation; but that power was exercised with opposite designs; and it was from their coaction that an admixture of good and evil was found in every created thing. The angels of Hormuzd, or the good principle, sought to preserve the elements, the seasons, and the human race, which the infernal agents of Ahriman desired to destroy; but the source of good alone, the great Hormuzd, was eternal; and must, therefore, ultimately prevail. Light was the type of the good, darkness of the evil spirit; and God had said unto Zoroaster, “My light is concealed under all that shines.” Hence, the disciple of that prophet, when he performs his devotions in a temple, turns towards the sacred fire that burns upon its altar; and when in the open air, towards the sun, as the noblest of all lights, and that by which God sheds his divine influence over the whole earth, and perpetuates the works of his creation.

... in directing his disciples to turn to the sun, when they offered up their prayers, he accorded with the national belief, and that was also flattered by the great veneration in which he held the elements.⁴

Several ideas in *Manfred* – even in its first act – can be interpreted as Zoroastrian. One of the most bold and radical passages in the play is in the speech of the Seventh Spirit, at I I 1101-31:

The Star, which rules thy destiny,
Was ruled, ere Earth begun, by me,
It was a World as fresh & fair
As e'er revolved round Sun in air,
It's course was free & regular
Space bosomed not a lovelier star. –
The Hour arrived – & it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless Comet & a Curse
The Menace of the Universe,
Still rolling on with innate force,
Without a sphere – without a course,
A bright deformity on high
The monster of the upper sky! –

4: Malcolm, *The History of Persia*, I 193 ... 198.

And Thou – beneath it's influence born
 Thou Worm! whom I obey & scorn
 Forced by a power (which is not thine
 And lent thee but to make thee mine)
 For this brief moment to descend
 Where these weak Spirits round thee bend,
 And parley with a thing like thee –
 What would's't thou, Child of Clay! with me?

Byron's concept, whereby a star may affect the destiny of a being born beneath it, is standard in most cosmogonies, Zoroastrianism among them. In *King Lear*, Edmund is facetious about it: "This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, ... we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars." In *Byron's Manfred and Zoroastrianism*, M.J.Quinlan analyses the problem thus:

Planets, meteors and comets ... were regarded as evil instruments operating under the direction of Arimanes, since they disturbed the order of the universe ... It is perhaps, significant that Manfred, himself so much a compound of good and evil, was fated to be born under a star which, though now a malignant force, had once occupied a place among the blessed sphere of the firmament.⁵

Modern research would bear him out to a degree. Originally the Zoroastrians saw all the five known planets as malign: however, contact with the Babylonian astronomers (Byron's "Chaldean Shepherds": III ii 13) caused them to think again, and to see only Saturn and Mars as inauspicious.⁶ Comets and shooting stars were, in the books of the *Zend-Avesta* (the sacred Zoroastrian texts) included among the female demons, or Pairikas – evil types of Djinn or Peri, who used their seductive beauty to turn men away from true religious observance: they, like the planets, constituted one of the minor imperfections which Angrya Mainu (Ahriman) introduced into the otherwise perfect universe, created by Ahura Mazda (Oromuzd).⁷

However, it is not clear that Byron would had a detailed enough understanding of Zoroastrian cosmology to have made such a point (Quinlan offers only twentieth-century sources as his evidence) or that, if

5: Maurice J. Quinlan, *Byron's Manfred and Zoroastrianism*, J.E.G.P., 1958, pp.133–4.

6: See R.C.Zaehner, *The Rise and Fall of Zoroastrianism*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1961, p.238.

7: See P.A.Wadia, *Introduction to the Avesta*, Bombay 1921, p.210.

he had, that he would have derived from Zoroastrianism the idea of inverting it in the way he does. We have no evidence that he read the translations of the *Zend-Avesta* made by the eighteenth-century French scholar Anquetil DuPerron, who travelled to Bombay as a soldier in the French Army to obtain access to the originals. Even if Byron had read them, he might have suspected, via information from several sources, that they were of doubtful value. Here, firstly, is the judgement of Sir William Jones (who also wrote a life of Nadir Shah, and whose expertise Byron recommends in a letter to Murray of November 1813: BLJ III 164) in his *Lettre à Monsieur A*** Du P****:

... vous avez traduit ces malheureux livres Zendes, avec le secours de ce Guèbre, qui ne les entendait probablement lui-même que très-imparfaitement.⁸

Next, that of L. Langlès, editor of *Voyages en Perse*, by the seventeenth-century traveller Sir John Chardin, a set of which Byron sold in 1816:⁹

... nous ne pouvons douter maintenant que les ouvrages du réformateur Zérâdocht [*Zoroaster*] ne soient *perdus*; ils ont été remplacés par une compilation récente, fruit de l'imposture et des rêveries d'un Destour [*priest*], qui vivoit dans la Guzarate, il y a deux ou trois cent ans; c'est cette misérable, ridicule et sur-tout ennuyeuse rapsodie, que les Guèbres du Guzarate ont eu l'impudeur de vendre et d'expliquer à M. Anquetil du Perron, comme le code de leur immortel législateur. Peut-être s'y trouve-t-il, en effet, quelques-unes de ses traditions, mais si complètement défigurés, qu'il n'est aucun moyen d'y reconnoître le cachet du grand homme.¹⁰

Thirdly, another respected British Orientalist, John Richardson, of whose *Dissertation on the Languages, Literatures and Manners of Eastern Nations* (1777) Byron also sold his copy in 1816 (CMP 241), dismisses Du Perron's *Zend* translations as revealing "uncommon stupidity ... jejune puerilities" and "frivolous superstition".¹¹

Despite selling so many of his books on Persia, and despite (perhaps

8: Sir William Jones, *Works*, 1807, Vol. X p.439.

9: CMP 233.

10: Chardin, *Voyages en Perse*, Paris 1811, IV pp.259-60n: this edition has, at pp.364-7 of volume VIII, another version of the Ahriman-Oromuzd theology, from which B. may have learned.

11: Richardson, op.cit., pp.14-15 and n.

because of) the fact that he knew none of the original texts, Byron clearly remembered some Zoroastrian ideas while writing *Manfred*, and either elaborated on them – as with the idea, seen above, of Manfred's natal star – or used them in a more straightforward way. There are references to a light / dark complementarity in Manfred's words at I i 29–30 (“Ye spirits of the immortal universe! / Whom I have sought in darkness and in light”) and in the speech of the Sixth Spirit at I i 108–9 (“My dwelling is the Shadow of the Night – / Why doth thy magic torture me with light?”).

Most interestingly, the passage in Malcolm's *History* would enable Byron to make a distinction between Arimanes, who appears in Act II, and Satan, who, as I shall argue in the next section, may or may not be the Spirit who appears in Act III.

Manfred is himself conceived partly in Zoroastrian terms: he, like the prophet (see Malcolm's paraphrase, above) visits hell (in II iv) and beholds Ahriman, who in turn regards him with favour; he is familiar with caves (II ii 80) and mountains (II ii 62–5); he honours the elements (II ii 62–75), “mystical figures” of which he appears to have, not in a cave, but in his gallery (I i 35–6). References to the fact that he was born under “a Star condemned” (I i 44) or “A wandering mass of shapeless flame, / A pathless comet” (I i 117) place him – whether or not his birth ruined the star in turn – as one deriving his being from Ahriman, who was deemed creator and commander of such bodies.

However, his self-comparison with the Magi at II ii 92 would, contrariwise, place him as a worshipper of Hormuzd, for “Magi” was commonly used by classical writers as a synonym for “Zoroastrian seers”: Herodotus, Xenophon, Cicero, and Pliny the Elder, for example, all use the word in this way – as does Plutarch, whose *Isis and Osiris* contains a summary of Zoroastrian belief very similar to that of Malcolm: see *Moralia*, 370.¹² At II iv 31, the Second Spirit refers to Manfred as a “Magian”, as does the Spirit who comes to claim him, at III iv 105. Another book which Byron recommends to Murray in the letter of November 1813 is d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* (for whose entry for *Zoroastre*, see *Zerdascht ou Zaradacht*). d'Herbelot offers this definition:

MAGIUS & MAGIUSI, Mage, Magiusiah, le Magisme, c'est-à-dire la Religion de Zoroastre, qui pose deux principes éternels de toutes choses,

12: A complete list of Greek and Roman references to Zoroastrianism will be found in the *K.R.Cama Oriental Institute Journal*, 14, 1929, pp.1–145, compiled by W.S.Fox and R.E.K.Pemberton.

savoir, la lumière & les ténèbres; le bien & le mal; un bon & un mauvais Dieu ou Démon.¹³

Shelley, who was with Byron for much of 1816, also knew of Ahriman – or Arimanes – in part through his friendship with Peacock, who started but did not finish a poem named after the god. He uses the name in a letter to Peacock of July 22nd 1816¹⁴ written after viewing Mont Blanc and the Vale of Chamounix; and continues from it with a description of the deity's power which anticipates the Hymn to Arimanes at *Manfred* II iv I–16: proof of how closely the two poets worked, and of how many thoughts they shared:

Do you who assert the supremacy of Ahriman imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death & frost, sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the unsparing hand of necessity, & that he casts round him as the first assays of his final usurpation avalanches, torrents, rocks & thunders – and above all, these deadly glaciers at once the proofs & symbols of his reign.¹⁵

But Byron's reading in d'Herbelot, Malcolm, Jones, Richardson, and Chardin, and his conversations with Shelley, are only two possible sources for the figure of Arimanes. By November 1816, in Venice, he has started his Armenian studies at the monastery of San Lazzaro. After an early visit, on December 5th, he writes to Moore (soon to publish, in the Fire-Worshippers section of *Lalla Rookh*, an important pseudo-Zoroastrian work):

There are some very curious MSS. in the monastery, as well as books; translations also from Greek originals, now lost, and from Persian and Syriac, &c.; beside works of their own people.¹⁶

By the first days of January 1817 he is sufficiently involved with Father Pascal Aucher, his tutor on San Lazzaro, to be helping him with two books: a grammar from which Armenians can learn English, and "... an M.S. grammar for the English acquisition of Armenian".¹⁷ The latter –

13: 1782 edition, IV 14–15.

14: Jones I 499.

15: Jones I 499.

16: BLJ V 130.

17: Letter to Murray, January 2nd 1817: BLJ V 156.

clearly at an early stage then – was not published until 1819. When printed, it contained the following:

(The authors of the Persian religion) say, that before the creation of heaven and earth and their creatures Zervanus existed, which being interpreted signifies *fortune*, or *glory*. He sacrificed a thousand years that a son might be born to him (named Hormistus) who should create heaven and earth and whatever in them is.

And after this sacrifice of a thousand years, he began thus to meditate: Will this sacrifice profit me? and produce my son Hormistus, or do I labour in vain?

And, during this meditation, Hormistus and Harminus were conceived in the womb of their mother; Hormistus by sacrifice, but Harminus by doubt.

Zervanus being assured of the fact, said: There are twins in the womb, to the elder shall the sovereignty be given.

But Hormistus having divined his father's determination, betrayed it to Harminus, saying: Our father Zervanus [sic] is disposed to give the sovereignty to the elder of us two.

But Harminus hearing these words, came forth immediately, and presented himself to his father.

Having seen him Zervanus knew not who he was, and said: Who art thou? he replied: I am thy son. But Zervanus said: My son is bright and of a grateful odour, but thou dark and offensive.

But while they thus discoursed, Hormistus was born at this time, shining and sweet, and presented himself to Zervanus.

And Zervanus knew him to be Hormistus his son for whom he had sacrificed. And he gave the instruments with which he had sacrificed into the hands of Hormistus saying: With these I sacrificed for thee, henceforward do thou the same for me.

And Zervanus held forth the instruments to Hormistus; and blessed him. But Harminus standing before Zervanus, said: Hast thou not vowed the kingdom to the elder born?

Zervanus who could not promise in vain, said to Harminus: Hence thou deceitful and malicious! the kingdom is thine for nine thousand years. But Hormistus I appoint over thee, and after nine thousand years he shall reign alone, and do what he wisheth.

Then began Hormistus and Harminus the creation. All things made from Hormistus, were good and right, but which Harminus made, was bad and wrong.¹⁸

18: Aucher, *A Grammar, Armenian and English*, Venice 1819 pp.199–203: for a detailed discussion, see Cochran, *Byron and the Birth of Arimanes*, Keats–Shelley Review 1991 pp.49–59.

I have argued elsewhere for Byron's hand in this translation (which is of the fifth-century Armenian writer Eznik of Kolb) and discovering it must have fitted in neatly with what we can see as two of his preoccupations during his first months in Venice – namely, finishing *Manfred*, and adding a Zoroastrian perspective to the way in which he did so. Byron had read, on the authority of Thomas Taylor, that Zoroastrianism shares ground with Platonism, in perceiving Soul, the creation of Hormuzd, or, as above, Hormistus, as having to struggle with difficulty from the prison of Matter, the creation of Ahriman, or, as above, Harminus, or, as in *Manfred*, Arimanes:

... howling dogs are the symbols of material daemons, who are thus denominated by the magic oracles of Zoroaster, on account of their ferocious and malevolent dispositions, ever baneful to the felicity of the human soul.¹⁹

Such dualistic implications would not have been the only factor in the Eznik passage to catch Byron's attention. The birth of complementary twins, one dark, the other light, echoes the section from Pausanias, referred to by *Manfred* at II ii 93-4, and quoted above, about the bringing-forth by Iamblichus of Eros and Anteros (though see also *Genesis* 25, 20-28, and 38, 27-30). The difference is that instead of two innocent demons, champions merely of lovers requited and betrayed, "fathered" by a mortal, the twins here, "fathered" by a spirit existing since before time, are responsible between them for the creation of, and embody the conflicting powers of, the entire moral and material universe. In likening himself to Iamblichus, *Manfred* makes himself – blasphemously – into an image of the primal creator of Zoroastrianism.

The Hymn of the Spirits at the start of II iv – inspired perhaps by Shelley's thoughts in the Vale of Chamounix – chant the power of Arimanes over the created world; but the speech to the Sun of *Manfred* himself at III i 3-29 ("Thou material God! / And representative of the Unknown / Who chose thee for his shadow") hymn by clear implication the power of his rival and complement, Hormuzd, God of Light, and, as I have said, turns *Manfred* into a Zoroastrian priest. *Manfred* may attend the ceremonies of Ahriman – has indeed served Ahriman for much of his life, with the same disdain with which his spirits serve him – but in his true soul he honours Hormuzd. When the Sun sets at the end of his speech, he intuits – as a faithful Zoroastrian – that his own death will follow rapidly.

19: *Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, *The Pamphleteer* p.43, quoted Raine and Harper, *op.cit.*, p.355.

MANFRED AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY

At III i 164-7 the Abbot casts one remaining glance at the dualistic nature of his doomed parishioner:

It is an awful Chaos – Light & Darkness –
And Mind and dust – & passions & pure thoughts
Mixed & contending without end or order –
All dormant or destructive; he will perish –

But this is the wise and charitable Abbot of the revised Act III. Established Christianity, in the first version of the Act, is depicted as materialist and hypocritical. All the ur-Abbot is interested in is the wealth which will accrue from Manfred's "gift of all [his] lands to the monastery" (original Act III, 12-13). It is a transparently villainous gesture; Manfred rejects and punishes it with ease, by commanding Ashtaroht to transport the Abbot to the peak of the Shreckhorn. Moral progress of a sort is perceptible here, for, to speak of an earlier Byronic hero, the Giaour is happy to make the corrupt gesture which Manfred rejects:

"I'd judge him some stray renegade,
"Repentant of the change he made,
"Save that he shuns our holy shrine,
"Nor tastes the sacred bread and wine.
"Great largess to these walls he brought,
"And thus our abbot's favour bought;
"But were I prior, not a day
"Should brook such stranger's further stay,
"Or pent within our penance cell
"Should doom him there for aye to dwell ... (*Giaour*, 812 -2)

The Giaour and Manfred clearly have much in common, both in terms of apparently inexpiable guilt, of suicidal tendency ...

"... On cliff he hath been known to stand,
"And rave as to some bloody hand
"Fresh severed from its parent limb,
"Invisible to all but him,
"Which beckons onward to his grave,

“And lures to leap into the wave.” (*Giaour*, 826-31)

... and in terms of their refusal of religious consolation:

“The rest thou dost already know,
“And all my sins, and half my woe.
“But talk no more of penitence;
“Thou see'st I soon shall part from hence,
“And if thy holy tale were true,
“The deed that's done can'st thou undo?
“Think me not thankless – but this grief
“Looks not to priesthood for relief.” (*Giaour*, 1200-7)

Byron has a note explaining this last line:

The monk's sermon is omitted. It seems to have had so little effect upon the patient, that it could have no hopes from the reader. It may be sufficient to say, that it was of a customary length (as may be perceived from the interruptions and uneasiness of the penitent), and was delivered in the nasal tone of all orthodox preachers.

The reason it had “little effect upon the patient” is, arguably, because the patient had slender reasons for feeling guilty in the first place. As T.S.Eliot points out,

Why a Greek of that period should have been so oppressed with remorse (although wholly impenitent) for killing a Moslem in what he would considered a fair fight, or why Leila should have been guilty in leaving a husband or master to whom she was presumably united without her consent, are questions that we cannot answer.¹

Between 1813, when *The Giaour* was published, and early 1817, when the original Act III of *Manfred* was probably drafted, Byron's opinion of Christianity does not seem to have changed. His ability to depict guilt and remorse convincingly has; but he still has no faith in the power of such Christian virtues as love, compassion and penitence to heal the wounds created by guilt and remorse.

The Chamois Hunter in Act I would give Christianity a better name. He exorts Manfred “for the love of him who made you” not to stand so near the brink of the precipice (I i 101-2); and the assistance he gives

1: *Byron*, reprinted in *English Romantic Poets, Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Abrams, p.201.

Manfred show him to be most charitable. That Manfred does not really welcome his charity – that he would happily have gone over the precipice (like Gloucester in *King Lear* – see section below on Shakespeare) – is doubtless significant. Also significant is his refusal of the Chamois Hunter's wine:

Chamois Hunter: Well Sir! – pardon me the question,

And be of better cheer – come – taste my wine –

'Tis of an ancient vintage – many a day

T'has thawed my veins among our Glaciers – now –

Let it do thus for thine – come – pledge me fairly! –

Manfred: Away – Away – there's blood upon the brim –

Will it then never – never – sink in the earth?

Chamois Hunter: What dost thou mean? Thy senses wander from thee? –

Manfred: I say 'tis blood – my blood – the pure warm stream

Which ran in the veins of my fathers and in ours

When we were in our youth & had one heart

And loved each other as we should not love

And this was shed – but still it rises up

Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven²

Where thou art not – and I shall never be. (II i 16-30)

The hysterical rejection of the wine is not fully explained, and is (see the Giaour's refusal, quoted above) probably as much a reaction against its eucharistic symbolism as against the hospitality of the Chamois Hunter, or against whatever associations it starts in Manfred's mind about his relationship with Astarte. Manfred, having lost, or destroyed, her love, now wants neither the love of man nor that of Christ. (For the echo in lines 28-30, see section below on *Faustus*).

In the revised Act III, shamed, firstly, by William Gifford's reaction to his depiction of the Abbot, secondly by the inadequacy of the original catastrophe, and thirdly, perhaps, by a new-found respect for holy men, consequent upon his association with Father Aucher on San Lazzaro, Byron seems to move away both from the eclectic theology of the play's first two acts, and from his earlier contempt for Father Confessors, and to pay more respect to an orthodox Christian viewpoint. He allows the Abbot dignity, and a pious, even heroic concern for his doomed parishioner. His respect for what Shelley was to call "the monstrous superstitions of the

2: ... *still it rises up / Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven*: compare *Faustus* at V ii 156-7: *See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! One drop of it would save my soul – half a drop!*

popular worship”³ was a thing from which Shelley, to his regret, could never woo him, and his motives for recasting Act III of *Manfred* seem to have been as much religious as artistic.

However, the gesture comes, arguably, too late. When the Abbot pleads “... reconcile thee / To the true church – and through the church to heaven” (III i 50-1) we have to protest that so much of the play has made real to us a series of demonologies which have nothing to do with “the true church”, that the church itself now stands exposed merely as one system among many, all equally worthy – or unworthy – of belief.

Still, the devil who comes “unbidden” (III iv 72) for Manfred’s soul, is identified neither with Nemesis nor Arimanes, as we might legitimately expect, but with Satan, via the Abbot’s reference to “Thunder-scars” at III iv 77 (compare *Paradise Lost*, I 600-1). But it is true that the Abbot, who can only interpret what he sees from a conservative Catholic viewpoint, would naturally see the devil as Satan, equally true that the devil merely calls himself “the Genius of” Manfred, and true that he has not the power to drag his intended prey down to Hell, as have Mephistopheles in *Doctor Faustus*, or the demons at the end of *Don Giovanni*. The religious and mythical parameters of the denouement are deliberately blurred: we are at liberty to wonder whether Manfred is going, unwillingly, to an orthodox Hell, at the behest of God the Father, or whether he will now, willingly, undergo another stage of that “death still more durable and profound” which Thomas Taylor, interpreting the Eleusinian Mysteries, suggests will be the lot of those souls “in a state of impurity”. The latter would be consistent with his neo-Platonism, as would his refusal even of a token Eucharist; it is Jessie L. Weston who writes that

The attainment of union with the god, by way of ecstasy, as in other Mystery cults, is foreign to the Eleusinian idea ... Greek religion lacks the Sacramental idea.⁴

Whatever the case, whether Manfred’s end be Neo-Platonic or Christian, it will certainly never resemble the lot of that other Manfred, part of the sheep-like group who stand dumbly amazed at Dante’s shadow in *Purgatorio* III. This Manfred, unlike Byron’s, is capable of repentance:

Orribil furon li peccati miei;
ma la bontà infinita ha sì gran braccia,
che prende ciò che si rivolge a lei. (*Purgatorio* III 121-4)

3: Letter to Horace Smith, April 11th 1822, Jones II 412.

4: *From Ritual to Romance*, Chivers Press / C.U.P. 1980 p.134.

Byron's *Manfred* is indifferent to the power of Infinite Goodness to embrace him, and seems rather to define his integrity as the capacity to scorn anyone who offers him love (Astarte excepted).

He is supported by the opportunistic game which Byron plays, juggling with ideas from a multitude of systems, and taking unscrupulous imaginative advantage of whatever they offer. "... a mixed mythology of my own – which you may suppose is somewhat of the strangest" was the way he alerted Kinnaid, on March 25th 1817:⁵ an "Olla Podrida" was what his concoction was called in an early review, by William Roberts.⁶ Byron was subsequently to exercise his wit at Roberts' expense, in *Don Juan* I Stanza 209: might not part of his motive have been annoyance at Roberts' attempt to call his bluff in *Manfred*?

5: BLJ V 195.

6: *The British Critic*, 2nd series, VIII, July 1817, RR BI 275.

MANFRED AND SHELLEY'S ALASTOR

Two letters of Shelley to Ollier, written in 1817, perhaps indicate a sequel to Byron's indebtedness to Thomas Taylor:

Be so good as to send me "Tasso's Lament" a Poem just published; & Taylors Translation of Pausanias. You will oblige me by sending them without delay, as I have immediate need for them. –¹

Do you know is Taylors Pausanias to be procured & at what price. –²

It has been suggested³ that Taylor's work on the later neo-Platonist Proclus may form one subtext to *Prometheus Unbound*, which Shelley did not start until September 1818, but which contains several lines corresponding to, and answering ideas from, *Manfred*.⁴ This is apt, for it seems clear that *Manfred* had been, in addition to everything else, a creative riposte to *Alastor*.

No-one as far as I know has ever wondered why Byron chose to put *Manfred* into dramatic form, or what themes were in his mind, which demanded the sort of objectification which the shifting perspectives of drama could provide, and for which narrative verse was less well equipped.

On June 8 1816 Polidori wrote in his diary:

Up at 9; went to Geneva on horseback, and then to Diodati to see Shelley; back; dined; into the new boat – Shelley's, – and talked, till the ladies' brains whizzed with giddiness, about idealism. Back; rain, puffs of wind; mistake.⁵

The following day he wrote:

1: July 24th 1817: Jones I 548.

2: P.S. to a letter of August 3rd 1817 (Jones I 549).

3: Carl Grabo, "*Prometheus Unbound*": an Interpretation, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1935, quoted Robinson, *The Snake and Eagle Wreathed In Fight*, Johns Hopkins 1976, p.258 n15.

4: See Robinson, op. cit., pp.125-34 and nn.

5: *Diary*, ed. Rossetti (Elkin Matthews 1911), p.121.

Up by 1: breakfasted. Read Lucian. Dined. Did the same: tea'd. Went to Hentsch: came home. Looked at the moon, and ordered packing-up.⁶

Are we to understand from the first entry that it had been a mistake to take the boat out in the rain, or a mistake to talk about idealism? Was it merely the ladies' brains that whizzed, or did Polidori's get a bit disorientated too? Did he look at the moon as an idealistically necessary prelude to packing up, or did he pack up in order to escape from the idealist associations of the moon? Like Lucian – to whom Polidori may have turned as a relief from all the idealism – Byron would seem to have been an instinctive foe to transcendentalist thought of most kinds, and to have been interested above all in fleshing out its abstractions with a view to bringing them down to earth: that is to say, to devaluing the very notion of transcendentalism itself.⁷ Most of his early epistolary references to Plato, for example, use the philosopher's name simply as a synonym for sex⁸ or for the avoidance of sex⁹ and some of his later poetical references are couched in similar terms – either of ignorance or scepticism: see *Don Juan* I St. 116, or XIV St. 92. His admission at *Don Juan* IX St. 76, that “The noblest kind of Love is Love Platonical” is, in the context of the court of Catherine the Great, just another way of expressing doubt about the whole idea.

However, when in a boat with Shelley in June 1816, one would have temporarily to take Platonism – or idealism, at any rate – seriously, for one of the only two major poems of Shelley then in print was the deeply idealistic *Alastor*, published earlier in the year. Byron never refers to it (few of his references to Shelley's poems are more than glancing) but it is hard to believe that Shelley didn't show him it, that he didn't read it, and that it was not on his mind during the writing of *Manfred*. Drama and idealism make poor bedfellows, for drama is unhappy with the purely abstract. When, at I ii 27-36, Manfred sees an eagle passing, he speaks thus to it:

I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself,
The last infirmity of evil. –
(An Eagle passes.)
Aye
Thou winged & cloud=cleaving Minister!
Whose happy flight is highest into heaven

6: Ibid p.121.

7: Compare Hopps, Gavin (ed.). *Byron's Ghosts* (L.U.P. 2013), *passim*.

8: BLJ IV 135.

9: BLJ III 136.

Well may'st thou swoop so near me – I should be
Thy prey & gorge thine Eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee but thine
Yet pierces downward – onward – or above
With a pervading vision ...

The eagle might at first glance appear open to an idealist interpretation, an emblem of the clear-sighted perfection beyond; and it is natural to compare the passage with the Poet's address to the swan (seen "upon the lone Chorasmian shore") at *Alastor*, 280-91:

"Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of her own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.

The contrast, however, is striking. Manfred feels himself altogether inferior to the eagle. In the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus¹⁰ the protagonist is warned by Hermes that he will become the prey of eagles, and Manfred would welcome the same fate; where Shelley's Poet sees the swan as a reminder of his own wasted genius, Manfred sees the eagle as a reminder of his own insignificance and mortality. Byron's bird is ornithologically (and thus dramatically) convincing, in that it is only interested in food for its young; the "luster" in the eyes of Shelley's bird is anthropomorphic: it is not a bird, but a poetic convenience. Byron would have felt birds to have an independent being which poetry should honour.

When in II i (90-2) the Chamois Hunter sees Manfred on the mountain, about to kill himself, the first thought that occurs to him (he being a realistically-dramatised Alpine inhabitant) is a practical one:

I must approach him cautiously – if near
A sudden step will startle him – & he
Seems tottering already.

Compare *Alastor*, 257-62:

The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In its career ...

Byron's "mountaineer" is guilty of no such misapprehension, and would not think in terms of "the Spirit of wind" anyway.

As with birds and mountaineers, so with geography. There are editors who would compute the precise direction of Shelley's Poet's wanderings:

The Poet flees from Kashmir to the northwest into what is now Afghanistan and then into the central Asian areas that in classical times (whose geographical terms Shelley employs) were Persian provinces; some of these areas are now parts of the U.S.S.R.¹¹

Even Shelley might have been surprised by such flattery of his apparent intention: but one can imagine Byron wondering how the Poet travelled, how he kept warm at nights, how many of the local "savage men" really looked upon and heard his "sweet voice and eyes" with sufficient favour to feed him (lines 81-2). Manfred moves around a relatively small area of Europe which Byron had recently got to know well. Taking his cue, perhaps, from Goethe, who carefully places his drunken orgy in the historical Auerbach's Cellar in Leipzig (where he had studied) and his Walpurgisnacht on the Harz, Byron not only names his mountains precisely, but attempts, via notes, to convince us that, for example, the rainbow, out of which Manfred conjures the Witch of the Alps at the start of II ii, was one he had seen. It is a rhetorical device, for although we know Byron went and inspected the rainbow¹² we do not know that he conjured a witch from out of it; but he imposes a convincing local habitation, and thus a convincing modesty, on his airy nothings, which Shelley would eschew.

The figure of Astarte shows Byron learning most clearly from the example of *Alastor*. Shelley's Poet has two women, one "real", in the adoring Arab maiden at 129-39, the other "ideal", in that of the Veiled Maiden of whom the Poet dreams at 151-91. Their close juxtaposition has

11: *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Reiman and Powers, Norton 1977 p.76n.

12: BLJ V 101.

obvious implications for Shelley's theme of wilful and doomed isolation, for the Poet ignores the one, and the other exists only in his dreams – a fact which ultimately destroys his happiness and his life. In creating Astarte, once living, but now dead, and, though her spirit may still be approached, almost inaccessibly cryptic, Byron economically combines the reality of the Arab maiden with the dream-quality of the Veiled Maiden – giving the whole creation a characteristically Byronic aura of guilt and horror which would be equally out of place in *Alastor*. Byron's piece being dramatic, we are also invited empathetically to imagine Manfred in Astarte's critical perspective, and their entire relationship, fleetingly, via a third party's perspective, in the interrupted words of Manuel at III iii 43-7: whereas Shelley's depiction of the two maidens in *Alastor* remains open to the criticism that neither is really seen in much of a perspective at all, certainly not one critical of the Poet. This may be part of Shelley's intention; but Byron would have seen in it a lesson about what to avoid, as he often did when reading Shelley.

Shelley's Poet, we find from lines 121-8, possesses an enviable capacity to learn via simple, ecstatic contemplation:

He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Really? what were they? we may imagine Byron asking eagerly, but with no hope of an answer, for Shelley doesn't say. The secrets do his protagonist no good, at any rate, for he continues his flight to greater and greater loneliness and death despite knowing them. Manfred has to work much harder to obtain his secrets:

And then I dived
In my lone wanderings to the caves of death
Searching it's cause in it's effect, and drew
From withered bones – & skulls & heaped up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. –Then I passed
The nights of years in sciences untaught
Save in the old=time, – & with time & toil –
And weary vigils – & unbroken fasts –
And terrible Ordeal – & such penance

As in itself has power upon the Air
 And Spirits that do compass air & earth
 Space & the peopled Infinite – I made
 Mine eyes familiar with Eternity:
 Such as before me did the Magi, and
 He who from out their fountain=dwellings raised
 Eros & Anteros at Gadara,
 As I do thee; – & with my knowledge grew
 The thirst of knowledge – and the power & joy
 Of this most bright Intelligence – until – (II ii 79–97)

Some self-denial, hard work and suffering is involved in the acquisition of most knowledge, and Manfred clearly had his fair share of it, where Shelley's Poet seems to have been vouchsafed infinite and incommunicable wisdom after a few days' gazing. It is true that Manfred is no less dead by the end of his poem than the Poet is by the end of his: but he at least has something to show for his life of isolation and guilt (some self-knowledge, real power over spirits, a human beloved who has, no matter what the consequences, returned his love, and a reputation locally which causes those who know him to grieve for him) where Shelley's Poet has nothing. He hasn't even written any poetry.

Shelley initially felt very confident about *Alastor*; on March 7th 1816 he wrote to Southey, presenting him with a copy:

I cannot refrain from presenting you with a little poem, the product of a few serene hours of the last beautiful autumn ... regarding you with admiration as a poet, and with respect as a man, I send you, as an intimation of those sentiments, my first serious attempt to interest the best feelings of the human heart ...¹³

But by December 8th 1818 he was writing to Leigh Hunt:

... I do not say that I am unjustly neglected, the oblivion which overtook my little attempt of *Alastor* I am ready to acknowledge was sufficiently merited in itself; but then it was not accorded in the correct proportion considering the success of the most contemptible drivellings. I am undec[e]ived in the belief that I have powers deeply to interest, or substantially to improve, mankind.¹⁴

The cause of his despondency may have lain partly in the failure of *Alastor* to stir any impulse of praise in either Byron or Southey, partly in

13: Jones I 461-2.

14: Jones I 517.

the creative use – and the implicitly critical use – to which Byron had put *Alastor* in *Manfred*. In his three references to Byron's play¹⁵ he makes no allusion to any borrowing or critique (contrast Goethe's instantaneous assumption of plagiarism from *Faust*, quoted below) but it is hard to imagine him being blind to it. When, in 1821, reading *Don Juan* III Stanza 98¹⁶ he found

He wishes for "a boat" to sail the deeps –
Of Ocean? No, of Air, and then he makes
Another outcry for "a little boat",
And drivels Seas to set it well afloat. –

... and (just conceivably) remembered the boat in which he, Byron, Polidori and the ladies had discussed idealism until their heads whizzed, might he not have felt a slight twinge as he reflected, in addition, that the second phrase which Byron advertises in inverted commas was not merely from Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*, but that it occurred twice (lines 344 and 363) in *Alastor*? It is also repeated no fewer than nine times in Book XI of Southey's preposterous "Islamic" epic *Thalaba the Destroyer*, and twice in Book XII.

Shelley's reading of *Manfred* is to be seen in his 1819 essay *On the Devil, and Devils*, where he quotes I i 46 ("A wandering Hell in the eternal Space").

15: Letters to B. of July 9th and September 24th 1817, and April 16th 1821: Jones I 546–547 and 557; II 283.

16: See Jones II 332, 357–8.

MANFRED AND FRANKENSTEIN¹

Mary Godwin began *Frankenstein* in June 1816, and (now Mary Shelley) finished it on November 22nd 1817; it was published anonymously on January 1st 1818.² Byron began *Manfred* (we think, for he didn't date the rough *Manfred* manuscripts)³ at about the same time; he began fair-copying it on March 18th 1817, and revised its third act early in May. It was published on June 16th 1817.

Both works were in part conceived in an atmosphere drenched, as Mary Shelley describes it, in the Gothic:

... it proved a wet, ungenial summer, and incessant rain often confined us for days to the house. Some volumes of ghost stories, translated from the German into French, fell into our hands. There was the *History of the Inconstant Lover*, who, when he thought to clasp the bride to whom he had pledged his vows, found himself in the arms of the pale ghost of her whom he had deserted. There was the tale of the sinful founder of his race, whose miserable doom it was to bestow the kiss of death on all the younger sons of his fated house, just when they reached the age of promise. His gigantic, shadowy form, clothed like the ghost in *Hamlet*, in complete armour, but with the beaver up, was seen at midnight, by the moon's fitful beams, to advance slowly along the gloomy avenue. The shape was lost beneath the shadow of the castle walls; but soon a gate swung back, a step was heard, the door of the chamber opened, and he advanced to the couch of the blooming youths, cradled in healthy sleep. Eternal sorrow sat upon his face as he bent down and kissed the forehead of the boys, who from that hour withered like flowers snapt upon the stalk. I have not seen these stories since then; but their incidents are as fresh in my mind as if I had read them yesterday.

'We will each write a ghost story,' said Lord Byron; and his proposition was acceded to. (p.261)

1: The text of *Frankenstein* used here is from *Three Gothic Novels*, ed. Peter Fairclough (Penguin 1973).

2: Dates from Robinson, Charles E. *Byron and Frankenstein*, at Tessier, Thérèse (ed.), *Lord Byron A Multidisciplinary Open Forum* (Paris 1999), p.105. Robinson suggests several parallels between *Frankenstein* and *Manfred*, but I believe the idea can be taken further.

3: He asks Hobhouse to bring Taylor's Pausanias, an important subtext for *Manfred*, on May 1st and June 23rd 1816 (BLJ V 74 and 80).

Thomas Moore would have us believe that Byron (referring not to *Manfred*, but to what became the fragment *Augustus Darvell*), proposed joint publication:

During a week of rain at this time, having amused themselves with reading German ghost-stories, they agreed, at last, to write something in imitation of them. "You and I," said Lord Byron to Mrs. Shelley, "will publish ours together." He then began his tale of the Vampire ...⁴

Byron refers to *Frankenstein* once – that is, he gives it the same amount of attention in his letters as he gives to Radcliffe's *Udolpho*, Lewis's *The Monk* (see above) and to Schiller's *Geisterseher* (see below). His reference is hard to find, and, when found, is mixed in with his attempt at refuting scandal:

The story of the agreement to write the Ghost=books is true – but the ladies are not Sisters – one is Godwin's daughter by Mary Wolstonecraft – and the other the present M^{rs}. Godwin's daughter by a former husband. So much for Scoundrel Southey's Story of "incest" – neither was there any promiscuous intercourse whatever – both are an invention of the execrable villain Southey – whom I will term so as publicly as he deserves. – Mary Godwin (now M^{rs}. Shelley) wrote "Frankenstein" – which you have reviewed thinking it Shelley's – methinks it is a wonderful work for a Girl of nineteen – not nineteen indeed – at that time. –⁵

Compare his wonder that Lewis was only twenty when he wrote *The Monk*.

Manfred and *Frankenstein* have so much in common that one might suspect collusion.

Both Mary Godwin's and Byron's protagonists are alienated from humanity, though in different ways. Here is the experienced Frankenstein, *some time after* having created his monster:

I abhorred the face of man. Oh, not abhorred! They were my brethren, my fellow beings, and I felt attracted even to the most repulsive among them, as to creatures of an angelic nature and celestial mechanism. But I felt that I had no right to share their intercourse. I had unchained an enemy among them whose joy it was to shed their blood and to revel in their groans. How they would, each and all, abhor me and hunt me from the world did they know my unhallowed acts and the crimes which had their source in me! (p.456)

4: Moore's Life (1830), II 31.

5: B. to Murray, May 15th 1819 (text from B.L. Ashley 4740; BLJ VI 126: this reference is not to be found in any of the BLJ indices).

... and here Manfred:

I could not tame my Nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway – & soothe – & sue –
And watch all time – & pry into all place –
And be a living Lie – who would become
A mighty thing amongst the mean – & such
The Mass are; – I disdained to mingle with
A herd though to be leader – & of Wolves. –
The Lion is alone – & so am I. – (III i, 116-23)

Now compare the naïve Frankenstein, *immediately after* the creation of his monster:

When I reflected on the work I had completed, no less a one than the creation of a sensitive and rational animal, I could not rank myself with the herd of common projectors. But this thought, which supported me in the commencement of my career, now serves only to plunge me lower in the dust. (p.484)

The one exile from his kind has motives which invert those of the other. Frankenstein desires to be a loving member of the human race; but his deeds have driven a wedge between him and them. Manfred's deeds (whatever they may have been, and Byron keeps them mysterious, as is his Gothic wont), only exacerbate a prior, arrogant disposition to misanthropy.

Both protagonists are scientific-philosophical overreachers, whose pursuit of skill, wisdom, and knowledge alienates them from their nearest and dearest, so that both long for the same thing:

Spirit: We can but give thee that which we possess,
Ask of us – subjects – sovereignty – the power
O'er earth – the whole, or portion – or a sign
Which shall controul the elements, whereof
We are the dominators each & all –
These shall be thine.

Manfred: Oblivion – self=oblivion – (I i 139-44)

For a short space of time I remained at the window watching the pallid lightnings that played above Mont Blanc and listening to the rushing of the Arve, which pursued its noisy way beneath. The same lulling sounds acted as a lullaby to my too keen sensations; when I placed my head upon my pillow, sleep crept over me; I felt it as it came and blessed the giver of oblivion. (p.359)

Frankenstein starts by studying Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus, then progresses to modern science: Manfred seems to have studied not only the Neo-Platonists, but also darker materials:

And then I dived
In my lone wanderings to the caves of death
Searching it's cause in it's effect, and drew
From withered bones – & skulls & heaped up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. – (II ii 79-83)

Frankenstein has similarly gone too far, and his father's careful avoidance of any Gothic elements in his boyhood reading has been a help in it!

I became acquainted with the science of anatomy, but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body. In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Darkness had no effect upon my fancy, and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. (pp.311-12)

Manfred has Astarte, who seems to be his sister:

She was like me in lineaments – her eyes –
Her hair – her features, – all, to the very tone
Even of her voice – they said were like to mine –
But softened all and tempered into beauty –
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings
The Quest of hidden knowledge, and a Mind
To comprehend the Universe – nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine –
Pity and smiles and tears which I had not –
And tenderness – but that I had for her –
Humility – and that I never had –
Her faults were mine – her virtues were her own –
I loved her & destroyed her – (II ii 106-18)

Frankenstein has Elizabeth (“my more than sister” – Frankenstein, at p.293; “You, perhaps, regard her as your sister, without any wish that she might become your wife” – his father, at p.419; “But as brother and sister often entertain a lively affection towards each other without desiring a more intimate union, may not such also be our case?” – Elizabeth, at pp.458-9). As with Manfred and Astarte, so with Frankenstein and Elizabeth. They make a complementary pair:

We were brought up together; there was not quite a year difference in our ages. I need not say that we were strangers to any species of disunion or dispute. Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together. Elizabeth was of a calmer and more concentrated disposition; but, with all my ardour, I was capable of a more intense application and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge. She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets; and in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home – the sublime shapes of the mountains, the changes of the seasons, tempest and calm, the silence of winter, and the life and turbulence of our Alpine summers – she found ample scope for admiration and delight. While my companion contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in investigating their causes. (p.295)

Some thing (as usual, undefined), which Manfred has done has destroyed Astarte:

Her faults were mine – her virtues were her own –
I loved her & destroyed her –

Witch of the Alps: With thy hand?

Manfred: Not with my hand but Heart – which broke her heart –
It gazed on mine & withered, – I have shed
Blood but not her’s – & yet her blood was shed –
I saw, & could not staunch it. – (II ii 117-23)

Frankenstein’s guilt, concealed but apparent, has the most upsetting effect on Elizabeth:

I listened to this discourse with the extremest agony. I, not in deed, but in effect, was the true murderer. Elizabeth read my anguish in my countenance, and kindly taking my hand, said, ‘My dearest friend, you must calm yourself. These events have affected me, God knows how deeply; but I am not so wretched as you are. There is an expression of despair, and sometimes of revenge, in your countenance that makes me tremble. Dear Victor, banish these dark passions. Remember the friends

around you, who centre all their hopes in you. Have we lost the power of rendering you happy? Ah! While we love, while we are true to each other, here in this land of peace and beauty, your native country, we may reap every tranquil blessing – what can disturb our peace?’

And could not such words from her whom I fondly prized before every other gift of fortune suffice to chase away the fiend that lurked in my heart? (pp.356-7)

Frankenstein is guilty because his creature has murdered his little brother William – his first sin is not sibling incest, which (we think) Manfred may have committed, but (indirectly), fratricide – which we know Byron’s later doomed protagonist, Cain, will commit. “I have shed / Blood, but not hers” (says Manfred, meaning Astarte), “and yet her blood was shed”.⁶ For Frankenstein, “blood” would refer to William’s blood – later Elizabeth’s own blood is added to it, as well as the blood of Justine, of Clerval, and of Frankenstein Sr.

Why is Manfred wandering suicidally on the topmost crags of the Jungfrau in II i? The Chamoix Hunter marvels at his presence there:

what is here?
Who seems not of my trade – & yet hath reached
A height which none even of our Mountaineers
Save our best hunters may attain [...] (II i 59-62)

We know why Frankenstein ascends the Mont Anvert (where the “shattered pines” – p.360 – remind us of those which reminded Byron of his ruined family).⁷ It is to “gain relief from my intolerable sensations” of guilt and despair (p.357):

My mule was brought to the door, and I resolved to ascend to the summit of Montanvert. I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy that gave wings to the soul and allowed it to soar from the obscure world to light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnizing my mind and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. (p.361)

6: The Creature is, like Cain, herbivorous: “My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment” (p.414).

7: BLJ V 102. It is on the Mont Anvert that Byron says Shelley wrote *Aθeoς* after his name in the visitors’ book (Medwin p.151).

But where on the Jungfrau Manfred only encounters the homeliness of the Chamois Hunter, it is on the Montanvert that Frankenstein comes face to face for the first time with his Creature. His longing for release and calm leads him, with unconscious, self-destructive instinct, straight to his nemesis.

Each man carries, like Marlowe's Mephistopheles, his private Hell about with him:

I was cursed by some devil and carried about with me my eternal hell
(p.476)

By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! – and compell
Thyself to be thy proper Hell! (I i 248-51)

Byron remembered the sufferings of Frankenstein's Creature when, seven years later, he started *The Deformed Transformed*. Both heroes are hideous, both are alienated from their progenitor, and both experience disgust at seeing themselves reflected in water. Here is the Creature:

"I had admired the perfect forms of my cottagers – their grace, beauty, and delicate complexions; but how was I terrified when I viewed myself in a transparent pool! At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondence and mortification." (p.379)

and here Arnold:

My labour for the day is over now.
Accursed be this blood that flows so fast;
For double curses will be my meed now
At home – What home? I have no home, no kin,
No kind – not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed, too,
Like them? Oh, that each drop which falls to earth
Would rise a snake to sting them, as they have stung me!
Or that the Devil, to whom they liken me,
Would aid his likeness! If I must partake
His form, why not his power? Is it because
I have not his will too? For one kind word
From her who bore me would still reconcile me
Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
The wound.

Arnold goes to a spring, and stoops to wash his hand: he starts back.

They're right; and Nature's mirror shows me
What she hath made me. I will not look on it
Again, and scarce dare think on't. Hideous wretch
That I am! The very waters mock me with
My horrid shadow – like a dæmon placed
Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
From drinking therein.

He pauses.

And shall I live on,
A burthen to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life?⁸

However, Arnold's adventures differ completely from the Creature's, from this moment on. Arnold has (at first) nothing to feel guilty about, and the Creature has no Stranger to make his life more of a challenge. Arnold is, unlike Manfred, but like both Victor Frankenstein and his Creature, anxious to feel human.

Byron learned this lesson – to make your Gothic heroes human – late. I think his reading of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* helped him towards doing so.

8: *The Deformed Transformed*, I i 32-54.

MANFRED AND THE *PROMETHEUS* OF AESCHYLUS

Byron was familiar with plays which, like *Prometheus Bound*, had of necessity – the protagonist being immobilised – to observe the Unity of Place:

Then the Scenes I had to go through! The authors, and the authoresses, the Milliners, the wild Irishmen, the people from Brighton, from Blackwall, from Chatham, from Cheltenham, from Dublin, from Dundee, who came in upon me! To all of whom it was proper to give a civil answer, and a hearing, and a reading. ... Mr O'Higgins, then resident at Richmond, with an Irish tragedy, in which the unities could not fail to be observed, for the protagonist was chained by the leg to a pillar during the chief part of the performance. He was a wild man, of a salvage appearance; and the difficulty of not laughing at him was only to be got over by reflecting upon the probable consequences of such cachinnation.

As I am really a civil and polite person and do hate giving pain, when it can be avoided, I sent them up to Douglas Kinnaird, who is a man of business, and sufficiently ready with a negative, and left them to settle with him.¹

But it was only when Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*, mentioned Aeschylus' drama in connection with *Manfred* that he referred to it: here is Jeffrey again:

In the tone and pitch of the composition, as well as in the character of the diction in the more solemn parts, the piece before us reminds us much more of the Prometheus of Aeschylus, than of any more modern performance. The tremendous solitude of the principal person – the supernatural beings with whom alone he holds communion – the guilt – the firmness – the misery – are all points of resemblance to which the grandeur of the poetic imagery only gives a more striking effect. The chief differences are, that the subject of the Greek poet was sanctified and exalted by the established belief of his country, and that his terrors are nowhere tempered with the sweetness which breathes from so many

1: Detached Thought 67.

passages of his English rival.²

Doubtless flattered by such a comparison, Byron wrote:

Of the Prometheus of Aeschylus I was passionately fond as a boy – (it was one of the Greek plays we read thrice a year at Harrow) indeed that and the “Medea” – were the only ones – except the “Seven before Thebes” which ever much pleased me. –³

This is all he says. *Prometheus* is for him just one Greek tragedy among several.

Both men may be writing guardedly; for *Manfred* is an excellent example of Byron's favourite inversion method⁴ – he takes everything Aeschylus offers, and turns it on its head.

To start with the Deity. The continuous sight of Prometheus staked and manacled to his rock keeps the cruel, ungrateful will of Zeus in our minds throughout, and this grim impression is later enhanced by the sight of Io, changed to a heifer and tormented by a gadfly because she won't yield to the Divine Lust. Manfred, on the other hand, defies every attempt The Powers make to destroy him. Arimanes has no influence on him, and Whoever it is who sends the Spirit to fetch him in the finale is frustrated. He even dies of his own will – he needs no demon to damn him, and indeed it's not even clear that he *is* damned. He's independent to the last.

Where the Spirits who commune with Prometheus do so in sympathy, those who commune with Manfred seem mostly to be antagonistic, or clinical.

Prometheus' torment is inflicted on him because of his benevolence: not only has he given mankind fire – as the cliché has it – but writing, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, architecture, and agriculture to boot. Zeus would have caused mankind to be destroyed. Manfred's search is for religious / philosophical understanding only: he is the reverse of benevolent, despises his kind, and shares his wisdom with nobody except the Witch of the Alps, for whom (we have to assume) it's already commonplace. He needs no god to teach him, as Aeschylus would have us believe men needed of old, but finds it all out – painfully – by himself.

2: Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review*; RR 888.

3: B. to Murray, from Venice, October 12th 1817; text from NLS Ms.43489; BLJ V 266. One of the poems in *Fugitive Pieces* is a translation from *Prometheus*.

4: See Cochran, *Parody by Inversion: A Favourite Byron Method* in *Byron's Poetry* (CSP 2012), pp.234-41.

Both protagonists are of a monomaniacal cast of mind. Just as no torment Zeus can inflict can break Prometheus' will, or cause him to repent his blasphemies, so nothing that happens to Manfred causes him to "wither", except the sight of Astarte, who (we understand) was his companion in spiritual searching, until whatever went wrong, went wrong. This is the greatest difference: there are no mysteries about Prometheus, unless it relates to the malignity of Zeus, whereas Manfred takes several secrets with him to oblivion: indeed, we aren't even sure that it is to oblivion that he goes.

One feature of Aeschylus' drama, Byron does not invert: not much happens in either play, the "plots" of both being largely exposition, explaining how the protagonists arrived at the passes in which we see them. Prometheus foresees a happy ending for himself, which we don't see; Manfred's unhappy ending is prophesied for him by Astarte, and sure enough we do see it.

In *Manfred*, Byron is making a huge, un-Aeschylan claim about mankind's equality with godhead, whether for good or evil, which is revolutionary for 1817: "as mad as Bedlam" was how he nervously described it. His hero is indeed, as George Sand put it, Faust freed from the odious company of Mephistopheles, though (as Sand did not add) no less miserable for that.

MANFRED AND *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

When at I i 35–6 Manfred summons up his first spirits, he doesn't merely use a chant or a gesture:

I call upon ye by the written charm
Which gives me power upon you – Rise! – Appear!

What the “written charm” is we are not told; but there is a precedent which may help us to guess. Here is Marlowe's *Faustus* at I iii 8–9:

Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
Forward and backward anagrammatised:
The abbreviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,
And characters of signs and evening stars,
By which the spirits are enforced to rise.

When each of the seven spirits who come to Manfred's call talks in an idiom peculiar to itself, we cannot but remember the Seven Deadly Sins at *Dr Faustus*, II i. When at I ii 74–6 Manfred cries

... ye toppling crags of Ice!
Ye Avalanches whom a breath draws down
In mountainous oerwhelming – come & crush me!

we again recall *Faustus*, at V ii 163–4:

Mountains and hills come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!

And when at II i 28–30 Manfred says in his hysteria

And this was shed – but still it rises up
Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven
Where thou art not – and I shall never be. –

We may feel further at liberty to compare him with *Faustus*, this time at V

ii 156–7:

See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop of it would save my soul – half a drop!

The echoes work via adaptation rather than imitation; but Byron was most concerned to deny knowledge of *Faustus*. Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review* critique mentions the possible influence of Marlowe on *Manfred*, only to deny it:

... there is nothing to be found there of the pride, the abstraction, and the heartrooted misery in which that originality [*Manfred's*] consists.¹

On October 12th 1817 Byron wrote to Murray, having been sent Jeffrey's notice:

I never read – & do not know that I ever saw – the “Faustus of Marlow” and had & have no Dramatic works by me in English – except the recent things you sent me; – but I heard M^r. Lewis translate <by> verbally some scenes of Goethe's Faust (<which> were some good & some bad) last Summer – which is all I know of the history of that magical personage
...²

Eleven days later he repeated the protest:

An American who came the other day from Germany – told M^r. Hobhouse that <it> {*Manfred*} was taken from Goethe's Faust. – the devil {may} take both the Faustus's, German and English – I have taken neither.
-----³

Two and a half years later, on June 7th 1820, he returned to it, as we have seen:

His Faust I never read – for I don't know German – but Matthew Monk Lewis {in 1816 at Coligny} translated most of it to me viva voce – & I was naturally {much} struck with it; – but it was the Staubach & the Jungfrau – and something else – much more than Faustus that made me write *Manfred*. – – The first Scene however & that of Faustus are very similar. –
-⁴

1: *Edinburgh Review* XXVIII, August 1817, p.431: RR BII 888.

2: B. to Murray, October 12th 1817 (text from NLS Ms.43489; BLJ V 266).

3: B. to Murray, October 23rd 1817 (text from NLS Ms.43489; BLJ V 269-70).

4: B. to Murray, June 7th 1820 (text from NLS Ms.43490; BLJ VII 113-14).

The more splenetic the denials, the less convincing they become; until, in the 1820 letter, the way he makes the unacknowledged transition from *Faust* to *Faustus* appears to give the game away. However, though we may suspect a bluff, finding out whether or not Byron did have access to a copy of Marlowe's play is surprisingly hard.

Faustus had not survived in the theatrical repertory as had *Every Man In His Humour*, or *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*: its naive and horror-stricken depiction of Hell would have been equally embarrassing to rationalists and cansters. Early in the eighteenth century it had been debased into a pantomime⁵ and was by Byron's day a museum piece, known to few: astonishingly, no stage performances of the text we should recognise are recorded between 1662 and 1896.⁶

William Gifford, Byron's "literary father"⁷ and leading editor of such plays in the period, knew it, and his suggestion for revising *Manfred*'s third act – Murray sent his memo to Byron in Venice – includes the words "see how beautifully our old poet Marlow has wrought up the death of *Faustus*". But he never edited a Marlowe, which Byron could have reached out for to find what he was referring to: there was no Complete Works at all before 1826. The play appears in none of the play-sets we positively know Byron to have owned: these devote very little space to Elizabethan or Jacobean theatre. *Dr. Faustus* is neither in Mrs Inchbald's *British Theatre*⁸ nor in *Ancient British Drama*⁹ nor in *The British Drama*.¹⁰

It is not in Dodsley's *Old Plays* (1744); but it does appear as the first item in a much better-edited and -printed anthology, *Old English Plays*, brought out between 1814 and 1815, by C.W.Dilke, friend of Keats, and future editor of *The Athenaeum*. Dilke conceived his work as a follow-up to Dodsley, and was encouraged in the labour by Gifford himself. We have no evidence that Byron owned this set, but as he and Gifford were close at the time, it is quite possible that he could have seen a copy at Murray's. However, as all three of the sets he did own were, along with so much else, sold in the 1816 auction of his library, the statement "[I] had & have no Dramatic works by me in English" seems true, at least as regards the few months between his leaving England and writing *Manfred*.

5: See Pope, 1728 *Dunciad* III 223-36 and 229n, quoted F.Boas, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (Methuen 1923), p.51.

6: See Bevington and Rasmussen, *Dr. Faustus* (Manchester University Press 1993), pp.51-3.

7: BLJ XI 117, 123.

8: CMP 239: this contains nothing by Marlowe.

9: CMP 232: this does contain *Edward II* and *The Jew of Malta*.

10: CMP 233: no Marlowe here either.

That a book was not – or was no longer – in Byron’s library certainly does not mean that he didn’t know it, or remember it; in addition to the possibility of Gifford showing him a copy of Dilke, the library of the Drury Lane Theatre, on the committee of which he served from May 1815 till he left the country a year later, could very well have held volumes which he lacked. After all, at *Don Juan* I Stanza 217, he quotes, of all unexpected things, Greene’s *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, a play not printed in any of the anthologies mentioned above (although he may in fact have got the idea of the “Brazen Head” from an opera called the *Capello Parlante*, which he saw at Milan on October 13th 1816).

Another possible source for his knowing some lines from *Faustus* may have been Charles Lamb’s *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived About the Time of Shakespeare* (1813) which includes a few sections of the play, between pages 32 and 40. There is part of the Prologue; most of Faustus’ opening soliloquy, to which Byron seems to refer in his 1820 letter (excluding, however, the lines about Jehovah’s name anagrammatized, printed above); sections from the closing scene (including the lines about Christ’s blood, and the address to the mountains and hills); and the Epilogue. The address to Helen is a startling omission. To Medwin, Byron denied having known Lamb’s anthology before 1821:¹¹ but he denied it over a year after writing, in the 1820 letter to Murray, “The first Scene however & that of Faustus are very similar”. Lamb’s final note on *Faustus* (which is quoted by Dilke: *Old English Plays*, I p.4) would certainly have whetted his appetite for more, and planted some ideas in his head:

Marlowe is said to have been tainted with atheistical positions, to have denied God and the Trinity. To such a genius the History of Faustus must have been delectable food: to wander in fields where curiosity is forbidden to go, to approach the dark gulf near enough to look in, to be busied in speculations which are the rottenest part of the core of the fruit that fell from the Tree of Knowledge. Barabas the Jew, and Faustus the Conjurer, are offsprings of a mind which at least delighted to dally with interdicted subjects. They both talk a language which a believer would have been tender of putting into the mouth of a character though but in fiction.¹²

To have read just those parts of *Faustus* which Lamb printed would leave Byron free to claim disingenuously, as he did in his 1820 letter,

I never read – & do not know that I ever saw – the “Faustus of Marlow” ...

11: See *Medwin’s Conversations*, ed. Lovell, pp.139-40.

12: Lamb, *Specimens*, p.40.

But, as with Goethe's play, he would probably have known enough about it before writing *Manfred* – or sensed enough – to have enabled a spark to cross the gap between Marlowe's mind and his. In 1818 the actor William Oxberry printed an edition of *Faustus*, the only one devoted solely to the play in Byron's lifetime: and it may be suspected that part of his motive was to cash in on the current controversy linking it with *Manfred*, published the previous year. In his introduction Oxberry writes:

The words of FAUSTUS are as dark as are his pursuits, yet there is none of that overcharged and offensive colouring that we find in Lord Byron's "Manfred," which has by some critics been compared to it; Manfred, has feelings which no human being ever had, and his expressions are like his feelings, monstrous and overcharged. The shadow of mystery is thrown around him; he is perpetually hinting at something dark and terrible, and thus curiosity rather than sympathy is excited [*sic*]. He always seems to mean a something more than he says or does; he is neither of earth nor of hell, nor of heaven, and just so much and such kind of attention is excited towards him as would be excited by any other monster. FAUSTUS, on the contrary, is brought forward into the light; we are suffered to see him, to become acquainted with him; we feel him a human being superior to the rest of his kind by industry and genius; we find him like Alexander, thinking to enlarge his boundaries; but his means are such as were, in his time, believed unearthly, and his death is perfectly in keeping with his life.¹³

Faustus may indeed be – not just in his appetite for knowledge, but in his vulnerability – a more immediately-acceptable Everyman figure than Manfred, whose arrogance, and whose intuitive feelings of guilt, of sheer satiety with the fact of being alive at all, are perhaps hard to identify with: he exists, too, in a relative social vacuum, with no friendly and admiring colleagues, nostalgic for the days when he "was wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo*" (*Faustus*, I ii 1-2). But his freakish isolation and angst were the very qualities Byron was interested in dramatising. As with Goethe's example, Byron took what he wanted from *Faustus*, and ignored the rest.

Evidence that Byron knew Marlowe's play, in fact, much more thoroughly than he admitted, may lie in another important line, which is said not by the protagonist, but by Mephistopheles. At I i 251, the Spirits condemn Manfred "Thyself to be thy proper hell"; this would not have been a strange idea to Faustus' tempter, who, at I iii 76, asked by his

13: *Doctor Faustus a Tragedy by Christopher Marlowe* ed. Oxenberry, London 1818 pp.iv–v.

victim,

How comes it then that thou art out of hell?

answers, devastatingly,

Why this is hell, nor am I out of it.

To fuel our suspicion, Byron uses this idea in his later plays, too: see *Marino Faliero*, III ii 519, or *The Two Foscari*, II i 365. Whether or not he knew Marlowe's play well – and I think it likely that he did – both he and his hero Manfred would have found the idea of Hell's omnipresence a sentiment all too familiar. (Barry Weller, at CPW VI 739-40, mentions also the flight through the air taken by Arnold and Caesar at *The Deformed Transformed*, I i 546-68, which echoes that of Faustus and Mephistopheles, as reported in Marlowe's Act III Prologue).

Jeffrey had argued the superiority of *Manfred* over *Dr Faustus*, thus:

... these, and many other smooth and fanciful verses in this curious old drama [*Dr Faustus*], prove nothing, we think, against the originality of Manfred; for there is nothing to be found there of the pride, the abstraction, and the heartrooted misery in which that originality consists. Faustus is a vulgar sorcerer, tempted to sell his soul to the Devil for the ordinary price of sensual pleasure, and earthly power and glory – and who shrinks and shudders in agony when the forfeit comes to be exacted. The style, too, of Marlow, though elegant and scholarlike, is weak and childish compared with the depth and force of much of what we have quoted from Lord Byron; and the disgusting buffoonery and low farce of which his piece is principally made up, place it much more in contrast, than in any terms of comparison, with that of his noble successor.¹⁴

... and it's true that Marlowe's play is well-known for its powerful opening, its sensational conclusion, and the insipidity of most of what occurs between the two. Having sold his soul to the Devil, Faustus hasn't the imagination, or greatness of soul, to profit by having done so in any ways other than the erotic: as a learned man in the very midst of the Christian tradition, he should (we confess) have known better. Manfred, on the other hand, seems without erotic urges, and seems to operate outside the Christian tradition.

14: Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review*; RR 888.

MANFRED AND FAUST

Before he was charged with plagiarising *Faust*, Byron was casual in his acknowledgement that he had known it (at least, from one source) when he wrote *Manfred*. On April 4th 1817 he wrote to Samuel Rogers:

I furnished Lewis with “bread & salt” for some days at Diodati – in reward for which (besides his conversation) he translated “Goethe’s Faust” to me by word of mouth ...¹

However, when Murray told him that the *Edinburgh Review* had defended him against plagiarism, he wrote, on October 12th 1817 (it is the same letter in which he announces the completion of *Beppo*):

Many thanks for the Edin. R. which is very kind about Manfred – and defends it’s originality – which I did not know that any body had attacked. – I never read – & do not know that I ever saw – the “Faustus of Marlow” and had & have no Dramatic works by me in English – except the recent things you sent me; – but I heard M^r. Lewis translate <by> verbally some scenes of Goethe’s Faust (<which> were some good & some bad) last Summer – which is all I know of the history of that magical personage ...²

By strange coincidence, Goethe himself, on the very next day, October 13th 1817, having received a copy of Byron’s play, wrote to Knebel:

The most amazing event for me was the appearance a day or two ago of Byron’s Manfred, presented to me by a young American. This strange and gifted poet has completely assimilated my Faust and derived the strangest nourishment from it for his hypochondria. He has used all the motifs in his own way, so that none remains quite the same, and for that reason alone I cannot sufficiently admire his mind. The remodelling is so complete that very interesting lectures could be given about it, as well as about the similarity with the original and the dissimilarity from it; although I certainly do not deny that the sombre glow of an unlimited, abounding despair becomes tedious in the end. Yet the displeasure felt on this account is always mixed with admiration and respect. As soon as our ladies, who

1: BLJ V 206.

2: B. to Murray, October 12th 1817 (text from NLS Ms.43489; BLJ V 266).

are passionate devotees of Byron, have devoured the work, you shall have your share in it.³

Ten days later Byron is hearing the accusation more frequently, and is getting angry about it. He writes to Murray on October 23rd 1817:

An American who came the other day from Germany – told M^r. Hobhouse that Manfred was taken from Goethe's Faust. – The devil may take both the Faustus's, German and English – I have taken neither.⁴

Over two and a half years later, on June 7th 1820, he sums it all up as he would have Murray remember it, in words already quoted:

His [*Goethe's*] Faust I never read – for I don't know German – but Matthew Monk Lewis in 1816 at Coligny translated most of it to me viva voce – & I was naturally much struck with it; – but it was the Staubach & the Jungfrau – and something else – much more than Faustus that made me write Manfred. – – The first Scene however & that of Faustus are very similar.⁵

The tale of his indebtedness continued, and seems to have been very popular among his American visitors, as well as Goethe's:

... I mentioned Goethe's comparison of *Faust* and *Manfred*: and Byron observed, evidently in earnest, that he deemed it honour enough to have his work mentioned with Faust. As to its origin, Lord B. said that some time before he had conceived the idea of his piece, Monk Lewis had translated to him some of the scenes and had given him an idea of the plan of the piece.⁶

In fact, Byron had already, in late 1821, admitted that there was another source of information about *Faust*, which no-one had hitherto mentioned:

"The Germans," said he, "and I believe Goethe himself, consider that I

3: *Briefe*, xxviii, pp.277f, tr. and quoted Butler, *Byron and Goethe*, Bowes and Bowes 1956 p.33.

4: BLJ V 270.

5: BLJ VII 113.

6: *Life and Letters of George Bancroft*, ed. M. A. DeWolfe Howe, New York 1908, I 148ff: quoted Butler, *op.cit.*, p.74: diary entry for May 22nd 1822, Leghorn). *H.V.S.V.* (p.292) gives the last clause as "... and had given him an idea of its plan".

have taken great liberties with 'Faust'. All I know of that drama is from a sorry French translation, from an occasional reading or two into English of parts of it by Monk Lewis when at Diodati, and from the Hartz mountain-scene, that Shelley versified the other day. Nothing I envy him so much as to be able to read that astonishing production in the original ..."⁷

The "sorry French translation", from which, however, Byron would have known *Faust* Part I in clear outline, and in second- or third-hand but fairly accurate detail, dates from as early as 1813, when Murray published de Staël's *de l'Allemagne*, first in French and then (as, simply, *Germany*) in English. This uncredited translation figures as No. 83 in the 1816 sale catalogue of Byron's library.⁸ Between pages 181 and 226 of the second volume there is an entire chapter on *Faust*, giving the following sections of the play, in a lumbering English version of de Staël's French prose versions. Byron may of course have read – and kept – the original French: he refers to it in a note to line 179 of *The Bride of Abydos*, I. It is interspersed with de Staël's own commentary, done from a classicist viewpoint – regretting Goethe's barbarism and irregularities, but conceding the fecundity of his genius, and so on:

After an introduction describing Faust in his study, including a line which anticipates the very opening of *Manfred* ("A solitary lamp enlightens this gloomy retreat") de Staël translates the first scene from 502 to 514, and 614 to 784: the contemptuous speeches of the Earth Spirit, *In Lebensfluten, im Tatenstrum ... du begreifst, / Nicht mehr!* (see below) then Faust's soliloquy on human limitation which it inspires; the address to the phial of poison; the Easter chorus; and Faust changing his mind about suicide: from *Ich, Ebenbild der Gottheit ...* to *... die Erde hat mich wieder!*

A paraphrase–description of the *Hexenküche* scene, and the remotest allusion to Auerbach's Cellar: de Staël claims there are no precedents in French drama by which to judge such material (though see *De l'Allemagne*, Hachette 1959, III 83n., for an alternative perspective).

The *Studierzimmer* scene from 1993–2000, prefaced by a paraphrase of Mephistopheles' soliloquy *Verachte nur Vernunft und Wissenschaft*; a paraphrase of his scene with the Student; a brief snatch of dialogue between Mephistopheles and the Student from *Doch ein Begriff ...* to *kein ... Iota rauben*: a paraphrase of Mephistopheles' mockery of learning.

An account of the start of the relationship between Faust and Margarete, then the scene in Marthe's garden, from 3419 to 3458 – the

7: Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. Lovell pp.141–2.

8: CMP 234.

dialogue between Margarete and Faust on his lack of religion, from *Lass das, mein Kind!* to ... *Umnebelnd Himmelsglut*.

The *Wald und Höhle* scene, opening speech from 3217 to 3250; that is, Faust's soliloquy on his simultaneous insatiability and satiety, from *Erhabner Geist* ... to ... *verschmacht ich nach Begierde*. Then a paraphrase (out of sequence in the usual text – de Staël used an early printing: see Hachette edn., III 105n) of the deaths of Margarete's mother and brother, then the two closing speeches of *Wald und Höhle*: Faust's *Im Hüttchen auf dem kleinen Alpenfeld* ... and Mephistopheles' *Wies wieder siedet, wieder glüht!*

Next, the *Dom* scene in its entirety – the Evil Spirit and Margarete in the Cathedral, with the Dies Irae as accompaniment.

After a tight-lipped general description of the *Walpurgisnacht* scene, de Staël translates it from 4183 to 4210: that is, the dialogue between Mephistopheles and Faust about the vision of the suffering Margarete.

Finally, the entire closing scene, from 4423 to the end of the play, between Faust and the insane Margarete on the eve of her execution.

de Staël's translations are indeed not entirely accurate, even lexicographically: she assumes, for example, that the *Meerkatzen* in the *Hexenküche* scene are a mixture of monkey and cat (see Hachette edn., III 82n). Nevertheless, *Germany* would have given Byron some idea of the shape of Goethe's play – though hardly of its idiom. Here, for example, is the speech of the Earth-Spirit to Faust in the first scene:

In Lebensfluten, im Tatensturm
Will ich auf und ab
Wehe hin und her!
Geburt und Grab,
Ein ewiges Meer,
Ein wechselnd Weben,
Ein glühend Leben:
So schaff ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid ...

Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst,
Nicht mehr!

And this is how it filters through into the English translation:

“It is for us to plunge into the tumult of exertion, into those eternal billows of life, which are made to swell and sink, are impelled and recalled, by man's nativity and dissolution: we are created to labour in the work which God has ordained us, and of which Time completes the web.

But thou, who canst conceive nothing beyond thine own being, thou, who tremblest to sound thine own destiny, and whom a breath of mine makes shudder, leave me! Recall me no more!”⁹

Byron might have been impressed by some of de Staël's comments:

There is an infernal irony in the discourses of Mephistopheles, which extends itself to the whole creation, and criticizes the universe like a bad book of which the Devil has made himself the censor.¹⁰

No belief, no opinion, remains fixed in the head after having listened to Mephistopheles; and we feel disposed to examine ourselves in order to know whether there is any truth in the world, or whether we think only to make a mock of those who fancy that they think.¹¹

de Staël's classicist temperament will allow little reference to the play's irony and jokes; she omits all reference to the songs – even those of the heroine – and merely hints at the three increasingly depraved scenes of riot and sensuality through which Faust is guided. Above all, the pact with Mephistopheles is seriously understated; there is no reference to the imagined moment in which Faust anticipates absolute pleasure: no reference to the famous line “Verweile doch, du bist so schön!”

How much more did Lewis' *viva voce* translations three years later tell Byron? “... some scenes of Goethe's *Faust* (which were some good & some bad)” is all Byron was prepared to recollect, and as most scenes from *Faust* – taken independently – are rather “good”, it is hard to know which ones he's talking about. *Manfred* is not notable for irony, jokes, or scenes of riot and debauchery, so Lewis was perhaps as reticent about the earthiness and humour of *Faust* as was de Staël: but Byron would only have appropriated what it suited him to appropriate. We may assume that Lewis did translate one important section which de Staël omits. At the start of Act III, Manfred says:

There is a calm upon me,
Inexplicable stillness – which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life. –
If that I did not know Philosophy
To be of all our Vanities the Motliest –
The merest word that ever fooled the ear

9: *Germany*, II 186.

10: *Germany*, II 182.

11: *Germany*, II 197.

From out the Schoolmen's jargon – I should deem
 The golden secret the sought "Kalon" found –
 And seated in my Soul. – It will not last
 But it is well to have known it – though but once;
 It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense
 And I within my tablets would note down
 That there is such a feeling. – Who is there? (III i 6-18)

It is an obvious reference to the ecstatic moment anticipated by Goethe's hero; except that no-one has created it for Manfred, and he has to pay no automatic price for it.

E.M. Butler interprets Goethe's instant assertion of creative plagiarism, in the letter to Knebel, as a sign of his vanity, as well as of his "hasty and feverish reading", and counter-asserts Byron's more complete originality.¹² But I wonder if this really is the case: few works of art are conceived without creative debt to previous ones – certainly not *Faust*, for instance, as Byron said, continuing the conversation with Medwin quoted above. Acknowledgement need not entail shame, particularly if the sub-text has been engorged and "remodelled" as fully and imaginatively as is the case here.

It seems to me that Goethe was correct in his reaction, in that Byron takes themes from *Faust*, and re-renders them with a view to distillation, interiorisation and economy. Instead of the need for a tempter to encourage the protagonist to fall, he presents Manfred as fallen from the outset, on his own initiative and without the intervention of any third party: "Thou did'st not tempt me, and thou could'st not tempt me," he says to the demon at III iv 137. Manfred is too arrogant to make anything as demeaning as a pact, with powers of any sort – as he asserts indignantly, at III iv 113-14. Instead of the seduction and ruin of a normal innocent (which takes up a large part of the play's action) he presents the carnal transgression, firstly as more extreme, though apparently just as fatal, and secondly, as with the previous theme, as being accomplished – again, with the help of no vulgar intermediary – before the play starts. The guilt of the protagonist is more powerful for being contained in the past, and thus more unambiguously irredeemable – as well as being less squalid. Astarte, unlike Margarete, had no children; and although Manfred states (I i 20, II ii 120-1) that he has killed people, the circumstances are vague, and his victims cannot, obviously, include the brother of the girl he has seduced, for that is him. He is, as it were, his own Valentin, as he is his own Mephistopheles, and would in any case have despised the assistance of a

12: Butler, *op.cit.*, p.33.

mere devil in killing anyone, where Faust does not.

Most importantly, Manfred's spiritual transgression, his search into the mysteries, is not the result of middle-aged intellectual surfeit. He has not exhausted the conventional sciences, never having tried them. His is a wilful quest after forbidden knowledge which he has pursued, without assistance, from youth. Bored as one could easily imagine him being, as Faust is, by the study of jurisprudence or medicine, one cannot actually imagine him having devoted himself to such disciplines in the first place. His imagination and curiosity are, in addition, less limited by a historically-determined culture than Faust's, for it is never clear at what period we are to imagine him as living; and, as an aristocrat and landowner, unlike the academic Faust, he is not circumscribed by the need to research along seemingly respectable lines, teach, and so on. He enjoys complete liberty to define his own spiritual role – is an amateur in the proudest sense of that word – and has, in terrestrial terms, only himself to blame for his doom.

E.M. Butler writes that Byron's originality differs from Goethe's

... in its much stronger affirmation of man's mastery over his own fate. The ethical triumph is the triumph of the unconquerable spirit of man, symbolized in the figure of a direct descendant of the mighty magicians of old who had power over the spirits and were in no way subject to them.¹³

One need not disagree; but to say that there is no creative debt is to imagine "creative debt" as indicating imitation only: what Byron did was think carefully about Goethe's example, and determine to do the opposite, with the same ideas and themes.

The clearest example is *Manfred* II iv – the Hall of Arimanes – in which the influence is often pointed out of three scenes from *Faust*: *Auerbachs Keller*, the *Hexenküche*, and *Walpurgisnacht*. All four scenes dramatise the protagonist's attendance at depraved festivities of one kind or another: however, several contrasts are notable. Firstly, the bestiality and squalor of the *Faust* scenes (of which, as I have suggested, Byron may only have gathered a remote impression anyway) compares strikingly with the magnificence of the Hall of Arimanes. Secondly, where Manfred dominates and virtually orders the action in II iv (see section below on Shakespeare) Faust is, in Auerbach's Cellar and at the Witches' Kitchen, a spectator only, in the *Walpurgisnacht* scene only goes so far as to dance with one of the younger witches, and has his attention readily distracted – by the image of Margarete, a part translated by de Staël, and indirectly

13: Butler, *op.cit.*, p.33.

inspiring Manfred's confrontation with Astarte. Thirdly, no supernatural powers of authority appear in any of Goethe's orgies (apart from Mephistopheles, Faust's infernal tour-guide) where Byron's scene is presided over by the almost-silent Arimanes, the Principle of Evil himself. The Globe of Fire on which he is throned could have been placed in Byron's mind, not just by *Vathek*, the traditionally pointed-out source, but also by the great ball which *die jungen Meerkatzen* roll forward at line 2401 in Goethe's *Hexenküche* scene. Their chant as they play with it (*Das ist die Welt: / Sie steigt und fällt / Und rollt beständig ...*) trivialises the universe and its turmoils, where the Globe of Arimanes conveys a grandeur even on the destructive powers of life – an effect which Byron probably wants. Not only is Evil magnificent in *Manfred*, but the protagonist is its equal, where in *Faust* he is its plaything.

Southey mocked this quality in Byron's play, when he wrote that Manfred "met the devil on the Jungfrau – and bullied him".¹⁴ Byron, quoting Southey's sarcasm, was jovially unrepentant ("Mr. Southey ... has apparently in his political life not been so successful against the great Enemy"): what he was never prepared fully to acknowledge was the fact that his confidence in the concept derived in part from his understanding of the different depiction of evil in Goethe's play.

Byron, in partly modelling his drama on Goethe's, loses much of Goethe's tonal and theatrical variety: but the two works, one written over decades and the other over a few months, still complement each other fascinatingly.

*MANFRED AND PELLICO'S
FRANCESCA DA RIMINI*

Here are two dramatic passages which contrast interestingly:

A: Ah, me! what words! Would you then pity me?
Or hate me less, if I should win more fame
In savage war? Speak but the word! Just say
The place, the years, and I'll be gone at once.
So much the stiffer is the enterprise,
So much the sweeter will its struggles be,
As you have laid them on me. Hope of fame
Has often nerv'd the vigour of these arms;
But thy command will give me far more strength.
I'll win my honours in no tyrant's ranks,
My country's laurel crown shall be my prize,
But woven by your hands. Your voice, your praise,
One glance of your sweet eyes.

B: Eternal God!
What words!¹

1: Silvio Pellico, *Francesca da Rimini*, tr. J.G.V.P. (Dublin, James McGlashan, 1851) p.27. The original runs:

Quai detti! Avresti
Di me pietà? Cessar d'odiarmi alquanto
Potresti, se col brando io m'acquistassi
Fama maggior? Un tuo comando basta.
Prescrivi il luogo e gli anni. A' più remoti
Lidi mi recherò; quanto più gravi
E perigliose troverò le imprese,
Vie più dolci mi fien, poichè Francesca
Imposte me la avrà. L'onore assai
E l'ardimento mi fan prode il braccio;
Più il farà prode il tuo adorato nome.
Contaminate non saran mie glorie
Da tirannico intento. Altra corona,
Fuorchè d'alloro, ma da te intrecciata,
Non bramerò: solo uno tuo applauso, un detto,
Un sorriso, uno sguardo ... *Opere*
(Paris, Thieriot, 1848) p.489: III i)

A: Parlami! Io t'ho chiamata nella tacita notte, ho spaventati gli uccelli sopiti sui quei rami, e svegliato i lupi della montagna, e fatto conoscere alle caverne il tuo nome invano echeggiato, che mi rispondeva. – Molte cose mi risposero – spiriti ed uomini – ma tu fosti muta. Deh, parlami! Ho vegliato più a lungo che le stelle, e guardato invano il cielo cercando di te. Parlami! Ho trascorsa la terra, e non ho mai trovato la sua sembianza. – Parlami! osserva queste furie che mi circondano – esse si commuovono per me; io non le temo, e ho pietà di te sola. – Parlami! sebbene irata – purchè tu parli – non m'affando di che, – ma fa ch'io t'oda una volta – questa volta – una volta sola!

B: Manfred²

The first seems conventional in contrast to the second, whose protagonist is much deeper into a despair which will not easily be assuaged by his going, like Radames in *Aida*, to win military glory in the name of his beloved. But the desperate plea for the beloved to speak to him just once, and the terminal feeling that if he gets no reaction this time he may as well give up, are features common to both. The second is from Silvio Pellico's translation of Byron's *Manfred*, which Pellico published in 1818 with his own tragedy *Francesca da Rimini*, and the first from a translation of that same *Francesca da Rimini*, published in Dublin in 1851 under the initials "J.G.V.P.", which *may* be the work of Byron's best

2: Pellico, *Tragedie ... Manfredo, poema drammatico di Lord Byron (versione in prosa*, Florence, no publisher named, 1859) p.460. The original (as published in 1817) runs:

Speak to me!

For I have called on thee in the still night,
 Startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs,
 And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
 Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
 Which answered me – many things answered me –
 Spirits and men – but thou wert silent all;
 Yet speak to me – I have outwatched the Stars,
 And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee;
 Speak to me – I have wandered o'er the earth
 And never found thy likeness. Speak to me!
 Look on the fiends around – they feel for me –
 I fear them not – and feel for thee alone –
 Speak to me, though it be in wrath – but say –
 I reckon not what – but let me hear thee once,
 Once more!

Manfred! (II iv 134-50)

friend John Cam Hobhouse, or Lord Broughton de Gyfford, as he had by then become.

Byron and Hobhouse first heard of Pellico and his tragedy on October 13th 1816, in the box at La Scala, Milan, belonging to Ludovico di Breme. Breme had a poor opinion of most of the Italian writers of his time, as Hobhouse recorded in his diary:

Of Alfieri his countryman he [*Breme*] spoke as almost the only writer of modern times – though he said he had seen a tragedy on the subject of Francesca di Rimeni [sic] by a young man his friend which though not a perfect work was very affecting – this poet had shown his tragedy to Foscolo who advised him to burn it – afterwards he showed it to Breme who was delighted and put it into the hands of a celebrated actress who play'd in it with great effect ...³

Breme captivated both Byron and Hobhouse with his droll wit, and his inexhaustible wealth of satirical anecdotes. They liked those especially which he told about A. W. von Schlegel, whose company they had endured in Madame de Staël's house at Geneva earlier in the year. Four days after their trip to La Scala, they went to Breme's for a magnificent dinner. Hobhouse records their reception thus:

to the Casa Roma to dine with Monsignor Breme – who lives in that large palace with his brother the Marquis – we found a large party of young men – some of whom we knew there, and Lord Byron as well as myself most gallantly received – indeed the enthusiasm with which my poetical friend meets [sic] is something extraordinary – Mirabeau the banker here came with his letters, merely to see “le célèbre poète” and Breme says he thinks he is more like Petrarch than any other writer – His encomiums to myself would make me blink in England but here only serve to make me fancy that I shall be sure of a favorable & fair reception and of having a just interpretation put upon what I say or do – This gives a facility of manner which I never remember to have before recognized – and makes me as yet like this place better than any other I have ever seen – A persuasion that I am of the liberal English, and more than all here a hatred [sic: for “hater”] of the congress Castlereagh system gives me a willing audience in this place which is not elsewhere found at least I have not found it –⁴

di Breme gave an account of the evening in a P.S. to a letter to Giuseppe Grassi of 16th October, in which he refers to

3: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 56v.-57r.

4: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 70v.-71r.

... il dottissimo Hobhouse viaggiator in Grecia, ora compagno di Byron
[“the extremely learned Hobhouse, traveller in Greece and now Byron’s
companion”].⁵

A strong reason for Hobhouse’s future writing about Italian politics and literature was thus that he thought the Italians took him seriously in a way the English didn’t. *The Substance of some Letters from Paris*, his liberal account of the Hundred Days, probably had much to do with their enthusiasm. Buoyed up by the reception he had had in Milan, he dedicated its third edition to Byron the following year. Also at the dinner

... there was ... the little Silvio Pellico, author of *Francesca da Rimini* –
I did not hear him say a word ...⁶

... and Vincenzo Monti, opposed to Breme in literary matters, but urbane and patriarchal enough for Byron to pay particular attention to what he said. When the evening finished, wrote Hobhouse,

We went home with a MS of *Francesca da Rimini* ...⁷

The former Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, which had had Milan as its capital and Eugene Beauharnais, Napoleon’s stepson, as its Viceroy, had since the Congress of Vienna been under Austrian rule. Ludovico di Breme had been one of its almoners (he had been head of a school for the court pages) and his father its Interior Minister. The literary factions into which Byron and Hobhouse found Milanese society split did not divide themselves very exactly along political lines, but which side one was on appeared to depend loosely on the degree of fatalism with which one accepted the new fact of Austrian domination. There was a rough consensus that although economically the Austrians were even more parasitical than the French, the French (or rather, Beauharnais’ puppet government) had been no less authoritarian than the Austrians had up to now appeared:

Monti & Pellico & Breme said to day [*Hobhouse records on October 21st*] that Napoleon’s government was dreadfully illiberal as to publications and that they planned an edition of the classics leaving out

5: See Breme, letter to Madame de Staël, 30th October 1816, *Lettere*, a cura di Piero Camporesi (Milan, Giulio Einaudi, 1966) p.388.

6: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 72r.

7: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 76r.

every thing in favour of liberty ...⁸

How much of the classics would survive if they were shorn of their libertarian rhetoric is an interesting question. Despite such an appearance of agreement, strong undercurrents of dislike and accusation were identifiable during the days which the two Englishmen spent in Milan, and streams of visitors appeared at their rooms, all anxious to put their side of the political story. It seemed that an important issue for them to understand was what exactly had happened on April 20th 1814, when Beauharnais' Finance Minister Count Giuseppe Prina had been lynched by a mob, apparently drafted into Milan from the surrounding country estates by local landowners opposed to Beauharnais, who were taking advantage of Napoleon's abdication, signalling the downfall of the Napoleonic kingdom and the subsequent Austrian invasion – which not everyone had opposed. All the Italians whom Byron and Hobhouse met were anxious that the two should hear their version of it. Another issue was the editorship and content of the *Biblioteca Italiana*, a literary journal which the Austrians had set up, and one's attitude to which was seen as a touchstone of whatever "patriotism", at such an uncertain time, meant. Ugo Foscolo – the one major Italian writer who had left the country, unable to deal with the compromise involved in staying on – had turned down its editorship, as had Monti. On October 20th Byron and Hobhouse are introduced to Giuseppe Acerbi, who had accepted the post, and who is described by Hobhouse as

... a middle aged tallish man with black eyes not polished
manners and something sly in his looks .. talking temperately
and casting round his eye to see if he was safe ...⁹

They dislike his way of condescending to the absent Breme, whose charm has worked its spell so well that Acerbi stands no chance of an objective hearing. In this context, any play written by someone patronised by and praised by Breme is bound to find favour, and, on October 22nd, after a visit to the Villa Buonaparte at Monza, the former country seat of Beauharnais, Hobhouse writes

We drove back to Milan – dined – at night Byron and I translated part
of Francesca da Rimini [–] I till late –¹⁰

8: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 94v.

9: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 86v.

10: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 98v.

Byron seems to have given up almost at once, perhaps because their Italian was not perfect – “B[yron] and I took a course with our grammars in the evening”¹¹ Hobhouse writes on October 24th. But Hobhouse persisted. On October 25th his diary entry starts

Did nothing particular in the morning but <erased: “translated some of Pellico’s tragedy”> {overlineated: “wrote letters”}¹²

That evening occurs the great comic event of their visit, a trip to La Scala for a performance by Tommaso Sgricci, the *improvvisatore*. Monti, and his son-in-law Count Giulio Perticari, whom Sgricci is *said* by Breme’s faction to have cuckolded, is *said* to be behind the scenes helping to censor the suggestions (for, to prove his genius, Sgricci improvises on themes given him by the audience). Sgricci does not go down well, either with the liberals in Breme’s box, or with Byron and Hobhouse, or indeed with the house, parts of which empty, to Breme’s vocal delight, as the display winds on and on. Monti – who had, according to Breme, been walking the streets touting Sgricci as a great talent in the morning – leaves town in embarrassment the next day.¹³ As if in reaction to this proof of conservative charlatanism, Hobhouse presses on, and, having been introduced (by one of the Karvellas brothers from Zante) to yet another polemicist, Angelo Anelli, and having read the following day a pamphlet about the events of April 20th 1814, he writes

At the arrival of the Austrians the lodge of Masons was dissolved and all those in the employment of government took an oath not <not> to act or meet any more. Anelli is a professor [–] he has taken the oath – he seemed to say that the Austrian was a very mild government – the English were hated as well they may be – by the Italians and suspected by the Austrians – I walked out dined and translated two acts of the *Francesca da Rimini* –
...¹⁴

The English were hated because of the assistance they had given the Austrians in invading, and the seal of approval they had allowed them to receive at Vienna in the following year. One expected nothing more from Austrians, but from the freedom-loving English one was entitled to some assistance, surely. Here was another challenge to Byron and Hobhouse –

11: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 106r.

12: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 106v.

13: See Breme, letter to Madame de Staël, 30th October 1816 *Lettere*, a cura di Piero Camporesi (Milan, Giulio Einaudi 1966, p.386-9).

14: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 120v.-1211r.

from two such famous English liberals, a gesture such as translating *Francesca* would go down well. Two days later, on October 27th, occurred the famous tussle at La Scala between Polidori and the Austrian grenadier officer. At the start of his entry for October 28th Hobhouse records “At the play of *Francesca* – of which translated little more than an act to day”,¹⁵ and at the end, “wrote a little of *Francesca* and then to bed”.¹⁶ On the 29th, despite an attempt by Hobhouse and Byron at intervening on his behalf with Count Franz de Saurau, the Austrian governor, who receives them very politely, but will not help them, Polidori is expelled; and the diary entry for October 30th starts,

rainy – finished *Francesca* da Rimini – Polidori went at half past one to day.¹⁷

It thus took Hobhouse thirteen days to draft his translation, at least, from the receipt of the manuscript on October 17th. Seemingly encouraged by Byron, Pellico had high expectations of it. On 22nd November he wrote to his brother,

Lord Byron non è autore delle *Bella Penitente*; non ha ancor fatto tragedie, ma l’Inghilterra ne aspetta da lui. Senti le obbligazioni che gli ho; non gli bastò di lodar molto la mia *Francesca*; si pose a tradurne un Atto e poi un altro, e poi si fermò nella risoluzione di farla conoscere al suo paese. Egli è Direttore del Teatro di Drurylane [*sic*] a Londra; l’ha dunque tradotta tutta (fra lui e Lord Hobhouse [*sic*] suo amico indivisibile) e la manderà quanto prima sulle scene di Shakespeare. Egli assicura che sebbene avvezzi a produzioni più complicate, i suoi compatriotti saranno colpiti della *bella semplicità* (come la chiama egli) di quella tragedia. Sarà preceduta da un Prologo, in cui Lord Byron informerà gli Spettatori di quanto è uopo che sappiano, cioè dell’essere produzione italiana, etc. e com’è uso su quei teatri, la chiuderà con un Epilogo – Questa lusinga al mio amor proprie dovrebbe farmi scrivere altri cose, eppure il tempo vola, e non fo niente ...¹⁸

[“Lord Byron is not the author of *The Fair Penitent*; he has not yet written a tragedy, but England expects one of him, and he feels this obligation. He did not hesitate to praise my *Francesca* highly; and set himself to translate one act and then another, and then resolved to make it known in his country. He is Director of the Drury Lane Theatre in London;

15: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 122r.

16: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 125r.

17: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56537 126v.

18: Silvio Pellico, *Lettere Milanese*, ed. Mario Scotti (Turin, Casa Editrice Loescher-Chiantore, 1963) pp.73-4.

he has therefore, with his inseparable friend Lord Hobhouse, translated it all, and will send it as soon as possible to the stage of Shakespeare. He is certain that although they are accustomed to more complicated works, his countrymen will be struck by the "beautiful simplicity" (as he called it) of this tragedy. It will be preceded by a Prologue, in which Lord Byron will tell the audience what they need to know of Italian dramas, and, as plays are in their theatres, concluded with an Epilogue – This increase in my self-esteem should make me write more, but time flies, and I have done nothing ..."].

Nothing came of any of these plans, which owed, indeed, more to Pellico's innocent imagination than to English good faith; they ran into the sand somewhere between then and 1820, when the *Quarterly* published Henry Hart Milman's article on Italian tragedy, and when Pellico was launched into real immortality, with the start of his ten freezing years in Austrian prisons. And, as Nick Haveley has shown,¹⁹ no-one knows what happened to the translation. It may have been published in 1851, under the pseudonymous initials "J. G. V. P." – I offer the idea as a tantalising possibility, but have no evidence other than that a translation was published in Dublin (by James McGlashan of 50, Upper Sackville Street)²⁰ in 1851, and that Hobhouse had been in Dublin in 1850,²¹ a fact which cannot be gleaned from the published version of his diary.²² There is no reference to any publication plans in the actual diaries of 1850 or 1851, but as he was a reserved diarist, his failure to mention any proves nothing.

The still more tantalising idea lies in Pellico's ingenuous words to his brother "[Byron] non ha ancor fatto tragedie, ma l'Inghilterra ne aspetta da lui. Senti le obbligazioni che gli ho ...". For, as we know now, but as no-

19: Nick Haveley, *Francesca Frustrated: New Evidence about Hobhouse's and Byron's Translation of Pellico's Francesca da Rimini*, *Romanticism* 1.1 (1995) pp.106-20.

20: McGlashan was, though Scots, a well-known Dublin publisher of the day. He had taken over the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1838 and changed its politics from conservative to nationalist, a leaning which would square with the politics of *Francesca*. He moved from 21 D'Olier Street to 50 Upper Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street) in 1850, so the translation would have been one of his first from a new address. I am grateful to Vincent Kinane, of Trinity College Library Dublin, for his help here, and also to Mary Caulfield and the Irish Byron Society. Anthony Cronin suggests that "[J. G.] V. P." might signify "[J. G.] Vere Power".

21: He visited Ireland with his daughters in September 1850, passing through Dublin on 9th-12th and 24th-5th (B.L. Add. Mss. 43755 2r-4v and 15r-16r).

22: At *Recollections of a Long Life* VI 264-5, the 1850 entry-sequence jumps from August 27th to November 11th.

one, not even Hobhouse, appears to have known then, Byron was writing a tragedy of sorts, namely, *Manfred*.

Manfred's writing is surrounded in mystery. In his diary, Hobhouse never refers to it, even though he is with Byron for what we assume to be much of its writing, from late August to early December 1816. The rough draft is not dated anywhere – a strange thing, for Byron normally dates the beginnings and ends of his manuscripts. It is commonsense to date the first act, in which the Alps provide much of the imagery, to before October 9th, when Byron leaves Switzerland via the Simplon Pass – but commonsense might ignore the fact that he had a phenomenal memory, and need not have been in Switzerland in order to write about, for example, the Jungfrau, or the Staubbach waterfall. We really have no idea at what point the composition of the play was when he arrived in Milan, and read *Francesca da Rimini* – we don't even know that he read all of *Francesca*, for Hobhouse and he only co-operate on "part of" it: see the diary passage from October 22nd, printed above. We know that he saw a performance of Monti's tragedy *Aristodemo* (often adduced as another Italian dramatic source for *Manfred*) on November 29th, at the Teatro San Benedetto in Venice:²³ but we can deduce nothing about his acquaintance with Pellico's tragedy, beyond assuming that he read its opening.

The scene containing the passionate speech of Paolo, printed at the start of this essay, is III i. It leads on to that part of the play on which Foscolo based his advice to Pellico, to burn the piece: for Pellico's bold decision is to re-write Dante. Another speech of Paolo's reveals the following (again I quote the 1851 translation):

Some time I tried to hide
My passion, but one day it seem'd to me
That you had read my heart. You from your rooms
Were coming towards the garden. I was lying
Stretch'd on a bed of flowers, near the lake,
Thence gazing at your rooms. At your approach
I rose in haste. Your eyes, fixed on a book,
Did not see me. A tear fell on the page.
I spoke to you. My words were much disturb'd,
And so in truth were you. That book you gave me.
We read together how Knight Lancelot
Was seized by mighty love. We were alone,
Suspecting nothing of each other's love.
Our eyes met. I grew pale. You trembled, and

23: Broughton papers, BL. Add. Mss. 56538 23v.

Suddenly left me.²⁴

... and so avoided the sin to which the passage from *Inferno* V, which Byron afterwards did translate, is so memorable a tribute. The lines here rendered as *We read together how Knight Lancelot / Was seized by mighty love. We were alone, / Suspecting nothing of each other's love* is lifted straight from the *Inferno* – although *sanza alcun sospetto* (*Inferno* V 129) means, in the original, that the lovers had no fear of discovery, not that neither sensed the other's love. Adultery is avoided for the rest of the play – but this does not prevent Francesca's husband from mistakenly killing both her and Paolo anyway, just before the curtain falls.

Byron, if he read the play at all, may have been struck by the sentimentality of the way it revised Dante, and, as an expert, having written several poems on the theme of triangular love-tragedy himself, *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *Parisina*, and so on, decided perhaps that it wasn't worth the bore of translation. Perhaps it reminded him too much of Leigh Hunt's *The Story of Rimini*, published earlier in 1816, about which he had also felt obliged to be polite. Hobhouse, however, who had no personal experience of adultery, or indeed very much experience of heterosexual infatuation at all, must have seen Francesca's self-denial as a fine womanly thing, and girded up his loins, and got out his grammar,

24: Silvio Pellico, *Francesca da Rimini*, tr. J.G.V.P. (Dublin, James McGlashan, 1851) pp.28-9. The original runs:

Io questa fiamma
 Alcun tempo celai; ma un dè mi parve
 Che tu nel cor letto m'avessi. Il piede
 Dalle virginee tue stanze volgevi
 Al secreto giardino; e presso al lago,
 In mezzo ai fior prosteso, io sospirando
 Le tue stanze guardava, e al venir tuo
 Tremando scorsi. Sopra un libro attenti
 Non mi vedeano gli occhi tuoi; sul libro
 Ti cadeva una lagrima ... Commosso
 Mi t'accostai. Perplessi eran miei detti,
 Perplessi pur erano i tuoi. Quel libro
 Mi porgesti, e leggemmo. Insieme leggemmo
 Di Lanciotto come amor lo strinse.
 Soli eravamo, e senz'alcun sospetto ...
 Gli sguardi nostri s'incontraro ... il viso
 Mio scolorossi ... tu tremavi ... e ratta
 Ti dileguasti.

Opere

(Paris, Thieriot, 1848) p.491: III i.

accordingly.

Manfred and Astarte are far closer to the Paolo and Francesca of Dante than are the Paolo and Francesca of Pellico: their love seems to have been consummated, and Manfred, at least, is as a result experiencing torment – in the company of devils, too, though not subject to their dictates. Byron may have read *Francesca da Rimini* as a negative example, and trimmed his own play thematically in consequence. The idea of going off for a soldier to the Crusades, or to fight for his country's liberty in the manner of William Tell, or of Pellico's Paolo, never occurs to Manfred, part of whose maniacal hauteur lies in his indifference to such ideas as military heroics, or patriotism.

Where Francesca reacts to Paolo's emotive speeches with several of her own – all to do with the need for renunciation – Astarte reacts to Manfred's still more emotive speeches hardly at all, except to tell him that he will die the following day. We can imagine Byron, impatient with Pellico's over-rhetorical heroine, determining to have a heroine entirely devoid of any rhetoric other than that implicit in short speeches and cryptic silence. Here, in the 1851 Dublin translation, is the speech of Francesca which triggers the one printed at the start of this essay:

What passionate words! Do you speak of your love?
And is it in her loss you grieve so much?
Is love so fierce a tyrant in your heart?
Oh! love should never be the only flame
In a brave soldier's heart. His thoughts should be
To win bright honour on the battle-field,
At the sword's point. Go! follow honour's flag,
Or love, weak love, will bring you to disgrace.²⁵

And here, in Pellico's translation, is the dialogue which follows from the single word of Astarte:

25: Silvio Pellico, *Francesca da Rimini*, tr. J.G.V.P. (Dublin, James McGlashan, 1851) pp.26-7. The original runs:

Che vuoi tu dir? della tua donna parli ...
E senza lei sì misero tu vivi?
Sì prepotente è nel tuo petto amore!
Unica fiamma esser non dee nel petto
Di valoroso cavaliere amore.
Caro gli è l'brando e la sua fama; egregi
Affetti son. Tu seguili; non fia
Che t'avvilisca amor.

Opere
(Paris, Thieriot, 1848) p.488: III I.

Manfredo: Prosegui, prosegui. – Non vivo che nel suono –
questa è la tua voce!

Fantasma: Manfredo! Domani finiscono i tuoi mali terreni. Addio!

Manfredo: Ancora una parola – son io perdonato?

Fantasma: Addio!

Manfredo: Dimmi, c’incontreremo noi ancora?

Fantasma: Addio!

Manfredo: Una parola, per pietà! Di che tu mi ami.

Fantasma: Manfredo! (*Lo spirito d’Astarte sparisce.*)²⁶

Pellico's own intention in printing *Francesca* with his translation of *Manfred* may have been to draw attention to the parallel he had seen – aware, perhaps, that he may, in 1816, have offered a model which Byron developed. Where his lovers are young, but, in a way uncharacteristic of youth, use their love as a motive for much utterance and posture, the lives of Byron's lovers are over, and all they have left is silence and defeat.

One of the most famous speeches in *Francesca* is not about human love at all, but one in which Paolo declares his desire to fight for his motherland. Here it is, in the 1851 Dublin translation:

In what good cause
Have I, a hir'd soldier, shed my blood!
O Italy! how gladly would I draw
My sword for thee, if threats of envious foes
Call'd forth thy strength! Far, above all other lands
That the sun shines upon, O Italy!
Art thou not the most lovely? Thou hast been

26: Pellico, *Tragedie ... Manfredo, poema drammatico di Lord Byron (versione in prosa)* (Florence, no publisher named, 1859) pp.460-1. The original runs:

Phantom: Manfred!
 Manfred: Say on – Say on –
 I live but in the sound – it is thy voice!
 Phantom: Manfred – tomorrow ends thine earthly ills.
 Farewell!
 Manfred: Yet one word more – am I forgiven?
 Phantom: Farewell!
 Manfred: Say – shall we meet again?
 Phantom: Farewell!
 Manfred: One word for Mercy – Say – thou lov'st me. –
 Phantom: Manfred! –

The Spirit of Astarte disappears.

The nursing-mother of all noble arts.
Birth-place of heroes! e'en thy dust has once
Breath'd in great men. Thy happy genius woke
The courage of my ancestors. All dear
To me live still to me within thy sacred bounds.²⁷

If these words are Hobhouse's, we may have evidence enough as to why he chose not to acknowledge them. Comparison with the Italian reveals a poor ear for rhythm, an incapacity to reproduce even the simplest of Pellico's echo- and balance-effects, or to attempt the dramatic qualities of his phrasing. Here, in the original, is the opening of Paolo's patriotic speech, just quoted:

Per chi di stragi si macchiò il mio brando?
Per lo straniero. E non ho patria forse,
Cui sacro sia de' cittadini il sangue?
Per te, per te, che cittadini hai prodi,
Italia mia, combatterò, se oltraggio
Ti moverà la invidia. E il più gentile
Terren non sei di quanti scalda il sole?
D'ogni bell'arte non sei madre, o Italia?
Polve d'eroi non è la polve tua?
Agli avi miei tu valor desti e seggio,
E tutto quanto hi di più caro, alberghi.²⁸

In the first line, the rhetorical force of Paolo's answer to his own question is neutralised by hiding it in the question itself. The concision of lines five to six is drawn out to two-and-a-half lines by translating the single word *combatterò* by *how gladly would I draw / My sword for thee*. The next rhetorical question is confounded by again dragging its one-and-a-half lines out to two-and-a-half, and destroying its shape by adding another *O Italy!* as if the pentameter needed padding. By now the translator is using enjambement regularly, not for effect, but because he is metrically lost, so that the economical *D'ogni bell'arte non sei madre, o Italia?* is turned from a question to a statement, again running over the line, so that *Polve d'eroi non è la polve tua?* loses not only its balance, but even its simple repetition ... and so on.

Hobhouse was a competent versifier (without being a poet at all) but most of the verse he wrote rhymed. If the Dublin translation of *Francesca*

27: Silvio Pellico, *Francesca da Rimini*, tr J.G.V.P. (Dublin, James McGlashan, 1851) p.14.

28: Pellico, *Opere* (Paris, Thieriot, 1848) pp.469-70: I v.

is his, it looks as if his usual search for a rhyme facilitated his rhythm, and gave him more conviction than he could muster in blank verse.

Inserted to make sure the audience had maximum sympathy with the hero from the outset, this speech – when delivered in Italian – brought the house down so often that the Austrians finally insisted on its deletion as the price of performance. Byron, aware, from his observation of the literary and political factions in Milan, of how much hot air flew about there in place of action – more, even, perhaps, than flew about in England – may have felt encouraged, by reading *Francesca*, in his determination to keep the action of his own tragedy away from politics, to put love – consummated – in the past, and to put his protagonists and their strictly private dramas on mountain tops, in lonely castles, or in Hell.

MANFRED AND SHAKESPEARE

Manfred is more Shakespearean than Byron's later closet-dramas *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari* and *Sardanapalus*, in that, like *Cain* and *The Deformed Transformed*, it ignores the unities of time and place with maximum indifference. But the classical dramas are in turn more Shakespearean than *Manfred*, in that they place their protagonists in important political roles, and make the political cost of their sufferings a vital aspect of the drama. It is important for Manfred's individual case that he should be a feudal landowner, unrestricted – as I have argued above – by the bourgeois demands which circumscribe Faustus and Faust; but his career and death, lamented though they are in both versions of Act III, do not have the significance for his County and his vassals that Macbeth's does for Scotland, or that Hamlet's does for Denmark. Byron is interested in creating actively critical perspectives on his protagonist (see section above on *Alastor*) but not in having him engage in such radical dialectics as characterize, for example, the relationships between Bolingbroke and Richard II, or Octavius and Antony.

I find far more – and more convincing – Shakespearean allusions, both overt and buried, in *Manfred* than I find Biblical ones, despite the assertions of CPW (see IV 476) and the listings of Travis Loooper in *Byron and the Bible* (Scarecrow Press Metuchen 1978, pp.124-5 and 234-8). Some are so obvious that they would be embarrassing, if they could not be read as open acknowledgements of creative debt, and if we could not see Byron using them cunningly, in a way that I don't think has been appreciated. Shakespeare's memorable quality, and his overwhelming power, obviously give him an unfair advantage, and place at his mercy any writer who does not exercise care over detail; but I think no playwright who knew what he was doing could make a character say, for example, "Alas! he's mad" (II i 59) or "I am most sick at heart" (I i 113) without setting up a series of echoes which he expects us to hear, and of which he is making imaginative use (for these two, see *Hamlet*, III iv 105 and *Macbeth*, V iii 20). Other lines may show Byron with his guard lowered slightly: thus, when Manfred tells the Chamois Hunter "I am not of thy order" (II i 38) it could just be bad luck which causes an echo to start from Malvolio's "I am not of your element" (*Twelfth Night*, III iv 119).

I may be open to the accusation of being too charitable: but I should

like to examine the possibility that Byron knew exactly what he was doing in placing so many Shakespearean references in *Manfred*, and that he handles them, for the most part, with skill, and in a variety of different ways.

The play's brevity is not Shakespearean, and derives from the fact that where in a Shakespeare play we see the protagonist's whole tragic career, from commencement via transgression to catastrophe (or however it shapes itself), with *Manfred*, all is effectively over before the plot starts, and our interest lies in watching, with leisurely concentration, as he approaches death, with no thought that his end could involve anything else. He is damned from the outset, a fact which Byron signals by two covert allusions to *Macbeth*, in the very first speech of the play:

My Slumbers – if I slumber – are no sleep
But a continuance of enduring thought
Which then I can resist not ... (I i 3-5)

I have no dread –
And feel the curse to have no natural fear... (I i 24-5)

The lines are not direct quotations, as are the two I refer to in the first paragraph above, but operate with greater discretion, firstly informing us what really is the case with *Manfred*, and then, as if by ancillary dramatic shorthand, making his case graver by offering us *Macbeth*'s by way of parallel (compare *Macbeth*, II ii 35-43, III ii 16-22, and V v 9.)

The next Shakespearean allusion works in the opposite way, by contrast rather than parallel. It occurs a few lines later, when *Manfred* summons the spirits. He starts thus (I i 41-6):

Spirits of earth & air
Ye shall not now elude me – by a power
Deeper than all yet urged – a tyrant=spell
Which had it's birthplace in a star condemned –
The burning wreck of a demolished world
A wandering Hell in the eternal Space ...

We are being asked here, firstly to be impressed by *Manfred*'s conviction, but secondly to think of Hamlet's sarcastic words to Laertes at V i 248-52: "What is he whose phrase of sorrow / Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand / Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I, / Hamlet the Dane!" The immediate dramatic context works directly in one way; the Shakespearean sub-text indirectly, in another. *Manfred* is at once heroic, and at the same time obsessed, and beyond the pale (see also the

famous dialogue between Hotspur and Glendower at *Henry IV I* III i 53-5, about which Byron jokes at *Don Juan* VIII Stanza 38.)

At I ii 23-4, Manfred stands on the cliffs of the Jungfrau, and says, among other things,

There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live.

This seems to me to echo Othello's words to Iago at V ii 92-3: "I'd have thee live; / For in my sense, 'tis happiness to die": and the paradox operates well in both cases, for just as Othello wants the hated Iago spared for as long as possible from the eternal rest that is death, so Manfred, not well-disposed towards himself, wishes the same fate on himself. Where Othello has power over Iago, his demon hitherto, so Manfred, his own demon both hitherto and now (see comments above on *Faustus* and *Faust*) retains power over himself, and will not wield it benignly.

At II i 31-2, the Chamois Hunter refers to "some half-maddening sin" in Manfred "That makes thee people vacancy", and the echo is clearly of Gertrude's words to Hamlet at III iv 116-18:

Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th'incorporeal air do hold discourse?

As what Manfred has just "seen" is non-existent blood on the rim of a cup, the allusion places him in cross-over territory between the hyper-cerebral Hamlet, guilty by omission, and the hyper-active Macbeth, guilty by commission. The Chamois Hunter, shortly afterwards, completes the equation by echoing Lady Macbeth at the Banquet scene (see III iv 63-4) and telling Manfred that "... these wild starts are useless".

A different, and more sympathetic, usage occurs in the lines of Manfred about Astarte, to the Witch of the Alps at II ii 106-9:

She was like me in lineaments – her eyes –
Her hair – her features, – all, to the very tone
Even of her voice – they said were like to mine –
But softened all and tempered into beauty ...

Byron here expands the lines of Sebastian to Antonio, about his sister Viola, at *Twelfth Night* II i 21-3: "A lady, sir, though it was said she much resembled me, was yet of many accounted beautiful"; a borrowing which at once confers grace on Astarte, and, momentarily, on the erring Manfred,

via his love for her. (There is a still more massive *Twelfth Night* borrowing in Manfred's words to Astarte at II iv 135-9.) This grace is, however, dissolved, when, at the end of the scene, Byron refuses to do the Witch's will, and is asked by her (II ii 159-60)

Is this all? Hast thou not gentler answer?

Which recollects the Duke's words to Shylock at IV i 33, "We all expect a gentle answer, Jew": an expectation as surely dashed by Shylock's behaviour as the Witch's is by that of Manfred – who thus stands revealed as obsessively self-destructive in the way Shylock is.

There are several more examples of Byron playing elaborate Shakespearean games: see the contemporary references to Equivocators in the Porter's speeches in *Macbeth* II iii, and those to Napoleon and Cochrane in *Manfred* II iii. But I wish to move on to one which I read as his most interesting experiment in Shakespearean imitation. Madame de Staël (*Germany*, II 193) compares the *Hexenküche* scene from *Faust* with the witches' scenes in *Macbeth*, and shows a limited understanding of both. I think that Byron understood *Macbeth*, IV i (the Cauldron Scene) very well, and showed it when, in writing the corresponding II iv (the Hall of Arimanes) in *Manfred*, he inverted all its values (to advertise his intention, he starts the sequence with the Third Destiny asking Nemesis "Where hast thou been? / My sisters and thyself are slow tonight": III iii 60-1 – compare *Macbeth* I iii, opening).

Macbeth starts the Cauldron Scene weakly placed in relation to the witches, and ends it even more weakly placed – subject utterly to their wills, and determined to kill Macduff's family, thereby sealing his own doom. Yet the manner of the witches throughout seems to him subservient, and they allow him the impression that he is in control of everything that goes on around the cauldron – that, for instance, they call up the show of Banquo's monarchs most unwillingly. It is an exercise in the most horrible dramatic irony, all directed against the protagonist. Byron ignores most of its lessons, and ostentatiously goes the other way. By contrast, Manfred starts the Hall of Arimanes strongly placed in relation to the Spirits – knowing (as *Macbeth* does not) exactly what he's dealing with, but with faith that his will-power and occult strength will give him more than enough resilience to encounter whatever they can show him. He is damnably well prepared, in other words, to interpret the scene, where *Macbeth* is damnably predisposed to misinterpret it, and to derive all the wrong, hopeful messages from it. The Byronic irony is that by the end of his scene Manfred has suffered much more than has *Macbeth*, because he knows exactly what is going on; the knowledge that he isn't being duped,

and that despite his willingness to suffer in her stead (II iv 125-6) Astarte and he are both probably damned (see query below on the unpublished episodes from *Vathek*).

The Shakespearean protagonist to whom Manfred stands nearest is Prospero; perhaps Byron's cunning is to be seen in the absence of any obvious references to *The Tempest* anywhere in the play, for the contrast would be too harsh in terms of the limitations the parallel exposed. Prospero seems to me every bit as guilt-ridden as Manfred (conceivably over a liaison with Sycorax, more evil than any transgression Manfred and Astarte could commit): as arrogant, and as self-contemptuous: probably as death-fixated: yet so much more as well. Leaving aside his roles as father, father-in-law, brother, and ruler, Prospero's attitude to his magic has more generosity about it than does Manfred's. Manfred's art is less impressive than his – he has “bedimmed / The noontide sun” (V i 41-2) which Manfred would never contemplate. Manfred never uses his art for anything other than the furtherance of his own self-destruction. No marriage-masques are given in his Tower; and he could never, as Prospero does at the climax of *The Tempest*, listen to the moral advice of one of his own spirits – he must dominate his spirit-world at all costs, and in consequence none of them love him, as Ariel loves Prospero. When Prospero dies, it will be as a mortal: Manfred insists on dying as a Magus, and we wonder whether his version of Magism may not be devalued by the insistence.

We have finally to admit that Byron is no Shakespeare, acute as is his ear for apt allusion, and cunning as is his critical faculty. In III i, Manfred explains to the Abbot why he could never tolerate a role as political leader:

Manfred:

I could not tame my Nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway – & soothe – & sue –
And watch all time – & pry into all place –
And be a living Lie – who would become
A mighty thing amongst the mean – & such
The Mass are; – I disdained to mingle with
A herd though to be leader – & of Wolves. –
The Lion is alone – & so am I. –

Abbot:

And why not live & act with other men? –

Manfred:

Because my Nature was averse from life –
And yet not cruel – for I would not make
But find a desolation: – like the Wind

The red hot breath of the most lone Simoom
Which dwells but in the desert (III i 116-29)

Compare Coriolanus at III ii 110-23:

Well, I must do it.
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe,
Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! The smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys' tears take up
The glasses of my sight! A beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my armed knees,
Who bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms! I will not do't:
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body's action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

Byron would eschew, in *Manfred* as in his classical plays, such base figures as harlots, eunuchs, babies, knaves, schoolboys, knees, and alms: and the result is that we can't take the snobbish Manfred as seriously as we can the viscerally-repelled Coriolanus (it's true that he is, as it were, on the spot, where Manfred is remembering). Lions and wolves are, Byron thinks, more dignified, because more distant and elevated. If Vathek's tale smacks somewhat of High Camp when compared with Manfred's (see next section) so does Manfred's when compared with that of Coriolanus, or of Macbeth.

*MANFRED AND VATHEK*¹

To Byron, William Beckford's *Vathek* was

... a work ... which ... I never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification.²

Earlier he had written, in a note to *The Giaour*, line 1334, of:

... that most eastern, and ... “sublime tale”, the “Caliph Vathek”. I do not know from what source the author of that singular volume may have drawn his materials; some of his incidents are to be found in the “Bibliothèque Orientale”; but for correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European imitations; and bears such marks of originality, that those who have visited the East will have difficulty in believing it to be more than a translation. As an Eastern tale, even Rasselas must bow before it; his “Happy Valley” will not bear a comparison with the “Hall of Eblis”.³

The influence of the novel on the poems Byron wrote immediately prior to *Manfred* is often pointed out.⁴

The standard point of reference when relating *Manfred* itself to *Vathek* is the opening stage direction of II iv, giving “Arimanes on his Throne, a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits”, which echoes unambiguously the following passage from Beckford's book:

An infinity of elders with streaming beards, and afrits in complete armour, had prostrated themselves before the ascent of a lofty eminence; on the top of which, upon a globe of fire, sat the formidable Eblis. His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours. In his large eyes appeared both pride and despair: his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that

1: Page-references from *Vathek* are from the 1983 O.U.P. *World's Classics* edition, by Roger Lonsdale.

2: Note to *The Siege of Corinth*, line 598.

3: CPW III 423.

4: See CPW III 415, and notes to *The Giaour*, 22, 339, 389, 479, 483, 496, 568, 612, 619, 748, 784, 1334; also *The Corsair*, 695-6; and *The Siege of Corinth*, 598.

of an angel of light. In his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre, that causes the monster Ouranbad, the afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble.⁵

“Aherman” is mentioned by Beckford immediately after this, as a spirit subsidiary to Eblis; by substituting the Zoroastrian Evil One for the Moslem, Byron effects a clear but honest borrowing – a gesture of creative respect – without merely plagiarising.

Manfred, the protagonist, is as like and unlike Vathek, the protagonist, as the similarities and dissimilarities between Beckford’s book and Byron’s would lead one to expect. Instead of depicting blasphemy simply against one monotheism (Islam, in the case of Vathek) Manfred depicts blasphemy against so many religions that one cannot keep them all in mind at once. Instead of a brilliantly-wrought exercise in High Camp, which is what I take *Vathek* to be, *Manfred* expresses a profound guilt, a true existentialist horror before its time, at which one is never tempted to smile – as one does at *Vathek*, conscious that such a reaction is partly what Beckford is aiming at. Vathek is compelled to his career of impious necromancy, partly by ambitions of political self-aggrandisement well beyond the Napoleonic, and partly by his mother – two undignified factors which Byron never confers on Manfred. Byron is, here as elsewhere, criticising via omission, in the act of borrowing. We may see him becoming more critical of *Vathek* as the process of writing his play continues; for, as Jerome McGann points out⁶ the original setting of III iii, at the foot of a tower, is a clear echo of Vathek and his own Babel-like creation. Manfred’s presence in such a building – designed for impiously astrological purposes – would bring him down to the monomaniac level of Vathek:

... having ascended, for the first time, the fifteen hundred steps of his tower, he cast his eyes below, and beheld men not larger than pismires; mountains, than shells; and cities, than beehives. [*Compare Manfred’s thoughts on the Jungfrau, at I ii 14-16.*] The idea, which such an elevation inspired of his own grandeur, completely bewildered him: he was almost ready to adore himself; till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars as high above him as they appeared when he stood on the surface of the earth. He consoled himself, however, for this intruding and unwelcome perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others; and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach

5: *Vathek*, pp.110-11.

6: CPW IV 474.

of his sight, and extort from the stars the decrees of his destiny.⁷

Manfred is not as stupid as this, and is obsessed throughout with a “perception of his own littleness”, despite having achieved the supposed wisdom at which Vathek aims. As Jerome McGann also writes, the subsequent unexplained fire in the tower, and the comical panic among Manfred’s servants, in the rejected III iii, confirms Byron’s model:

In the mean time, the inhabitants of Samarah, scared at the light which shone over the city, arose in haste; ascended their roofs, beheld the tower on fire, and hurried, half naked, to the square. Their love for their sovereign immediately awoke; and, apprehending him in danger of perishing in his tower, their whole thoughts were occupied with the means of his safety.⁸

Byron’s avoids these recollections in his revised act. Vathek’s mother-fixation is part of the comedy of his predicament, and deprives him of the dignity which the psychologically similar Coriolanus possesses; and dignity for his hero is an effect at which Byron is aiming. However, Manfred’s tone when faced finally by his “Genius” (in III iv) still derives from that of Vathek, when similarly placed. Here is Vathek, faced with a Genius who would warn him off the final stage of his transgressions:

Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions: thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal, as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood, to acquire a power, which will make thy equals tremble: deem not that I shall retire, when in view of the port; or, that I will relinquish her, who is dearer to me than either my life, or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! Let him illumine my career! it matters not where it may end.⁹

And here Manfred, faced with his Genius, after all his transgressions are accomplished:

Thou false fiend! thou liest!
My life is in it’s last hour – that I know
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour –
I do not combat against Death but thee –
And thy surrounding Angels – my past power

7: *Vathek*, p.4.

8: *Ibid.*, p.33.

9: *Ibid.*, p.105.

Was purchased by no compact with thy crew –
 But by superior science – penance – daring –
 And length of watching – strength of mind – & skill
 In knowledge of our Fathers – when the Earth –
 Saw men & spirits walking side by side
 And gave ye no Supremacy: – I stand
 Upon my Strength – I do defy – deny –
 Spurn back – & scorn ye! – (III iv 109-21)

... and so on. Vathek, like the necromancers of Marlowe and Goethe, has others to blame – his mother, and the ugly Giaour who starts him on his evil path; but Manfred is his own tempter and will be his own Nemesis.

One underdeveloped part of the final episode in Vathek probably caught Byron's attention. Walking in the vicinity of the Hall of Eblis, Vathek and his beloved Nouronihar come across

... a small square chamber, where they discovered, sitting on sofas, four young men, of goodly figure, and a lovely female, who were holding a melancholy conversation by the glimmering of a lonely lamp.¹⁰

The "lonely lamp" echoes Manfred's first line ("The lamp must be replenished ..."). The woman and one of the men are – we later understand – brother and sister, and have pursued, like the others, careers of great sin, for which they now await punishment; though what their sins have been we are not told. They gravely invite Vathek and his beloved to sit and tell their story, and to listen to theirs: but Beckford, who worked at the extra episodes the stories would have involved, never included them in his finished work, despite debating whether or not to do so.¹¹ When the final doom is pronounced on Carathis, Vathek's mother, it is also pronounced on Vathek, Nouronihar, and on their four new companions, and its effect on their relationship is terrible:

Kalilah and his sister [*this is the first and only time their relationship is defined*] made reciprocal gestures of imprecation; all testified their horror for each other by the most ghastly convulsions, and screams that could not be smothered. All severally plunged themselves into the accursed multitude, there to wander in an eternity of unabating anguish.¹²

10: *Vathek*, pp.115-16.

11: See Lonsdale, pp.158-9, n to 116.

12: *Vathek*, pp.11 20.

Did Byron imagine the afterlife of Astarte and Manfred in similar terms? When Samuel Rogers went to Fonthill, he gathered more about the extra episodes, and told Byron something of them; Byron's curiosity was naturally great. On March 3rd 1818 he wrote to Rogers:

Your account of your visit to F. is very striking. – Could you beg of him for me a copy in M.S.S. of the remaining tales? I think I deserve them as a strenuous & public *admirer of the first one*; [see the first two quotations in this chapter] – I will <re> return it – when read – & make no ill use of the copy <wh> if granted – Murray would send me out any thing safely; – if ever I return to England I should like very much to see the author, with his permission; – in the mean time you could not oblige me more than by obtaining me the perusal I request – in French or English – all's one for that – though I prefer Italian to either. – I have a french Copy of *Vathek* which I bought at Lausanne. – – – – –¹³

As far as we can tell, Rogers never persuaded Beckford to comply with Byron's request. Had he done so, Byron would have been gratified, for one of the three tales – the unfinished *Story of the Princess Zukais and the Prince Kalilah* – is indeed a tale of accursed, albeit unconsummated, sibling incest. (The Episodes were published by Stephen Swift & Co in 1912, in a translation by Sir Frank Marzials.)

Beckford, upon reading the letter to Rogers in Moore's *Life* (evidence, perhaps, that Rogers never passed on the request) was scathing about Byron's interest in *Vathek* and its extra episodes, assuming merely that Byron was looking for material to plagiarise:

Rather cool after all – considering the red hot partiality he professed for *Vathek* – a book, I know, he used to carry about in his pocket, & which lay sometimes I have been told, under his very pillow – happy for him that he never saw them [*sic*] episodes – they would have roused him to frenzy – & have shortened the little rest he ever enjoyed – the most original of the set as full as it could glare of Hell & the Devil, I have since thrown into the fire – the two which remain are quite sufficiently Satanic – Your Corsairs & Don Juans are milk & water Puritans compared with Barkiarokh, [*printed Marzials, pp.51–161*] whose atrocities shamelessly worked up & rhymingly paraphrased in the style of the passage about the moon and the cloud in his *Siege of Corinth*, might have furnished the material of half a dozen poems & extracted as many thousands from the coffers of absolute

13: B. to Rogers, March 3rd 1818: (text from UCL Library Sharpe Papers 18 ff.148-9; BLJ VI 16-18).

John [*Murray*] Signed W.B.¹⁴

14: Quoted Harold S. Wiener, *Literary Sources of Byron's Turkish Tales*, in *Nineteenth Century Studies* (Princeton 1940), p.95.

MANFRED AND WORDSWORTH

To trace the serpentine changes in Byron's attitude to Wordsworth during the months before and during the writing of *Manfred* is a complicated business. To Leigh Hunt he sent, on October 30th 1815, a brief but damning criticism of *The Excursion* (which had been published the previous year) saying, among other echoes of the *Don Juan* Dedication, "... who can understand him? – let those who do make him intelligible" and taking Wordsworth to task on his depiction of Greece at Book IV, 719-20:

He says of Greece in the body of his book – that it is a land of

“rivers – fertile plains – & sounding shores
Under a cope of variegated sky.”

The rivers are dry half the year – the plains are barren – and the shores still & tideless as the Mediterranean can make them – the Sky is anything but variegated – being for months & months – but “darkly – deeply – beautifully blue.”¹

The line “darkly – deeply – beautifully blue” is from Southey's *Madoc in Wales*, V 102 (see also *Don Juan*, IV Stanza 110); to tar Wordsworth with such a brush is an economical way of damning him, and his ignorance of nature in Greece, at least. However, it is a commonplace to state that by June 1816, as Byron writes *Childe Harold III* (partly while in the company of Shelley) he has taken on a Wordsworthian optimism in the face of nature:

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me,
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,

1: B. to Leigh Hunt, October 30th 1815: (text from V&A Forster, 48.G.22 ff. 12/1-4; BLJ IV 324-6)

Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
 And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
 Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain. (CHP III st.72)

This slightly *ersatz* feeling may be less from reading *The Excursion*, and more from reading such earlier works as *Tintern Abbey*: but Byron's note to Stanza 99 might seem to state the debt unambiguously:

... the feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite rocks of Meillerie is invested, is of a still higher and more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion; it is a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our own participation of its good and of its glory: it is the great principle of the universe, which is there more condensed, but not less manifested; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole.

No-one can really calculate how much such moments owe to Wordsworth *tout court*, how much to Wordsworth as mediated through Shelley, and how much to *La Nouvelle Héloïse: The Prisoner of Chillon*, written at exactly the same time, has several touches which are either Wordsworthian or Rousseauesque. Whatever the case, by September 28th, at the end of his Alpine tour with Hobhouse, the weight of life's reality has reversed Byron's intuition, and nature is no longer, for him, something in which one can lose oneself:

In the weather for this tour (of 13 days) I have been very fortunate – fortunate in a companion (Mr. H[obhouse]) fortunate in our prospects – and exempt from even the little petty accidents & delays which often render journeys in a less wild country – disappointing. – I was disposed to be pleased – I am a lover of Nature – and an Admirer of Beauty – I can bear fatigue – & welcome privation – and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. – But in all this – the recollections of bitterness – & more especially of recent & more home desolation – which must accompany me through life – have preyed upon me here – and neither the music of the Shepherd – the crashing of the Avalanche – nor the torrent – the mountain – the Glacier – the Forest – nor the Cloud – have for one moment – lightened the weight upon my heart – nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory – around – above – & beneath me. – I am past reproaches – and there is a time for all things – I am past the wish of vengeance – and I know of none like for what I have suffered – but the hour will come – when what I feel must be felt – & the — — but enough. — — To you – dearest Augusta – I send – and for you – I have kept this record of what I have seen & felt. – Love me

as you are beloved by me. — —²

Nature is now a painful reminder of one's own limitations and suffering. But oddly, it is a section of *Manfred* written prior to the play, and now re-used, that expresses this deeply un-Wordsworthian idea. It is not clear (see elsewhere) whom we are to hear making the Incantation at the end of Act I, but we may guess it to be chorused by the Seven Spirits whom Manfred has just summoned, and who have – as he interprets – mocked him with the apparition of the “beautiful female figure”. They represent different aspects of Nature, and chant lines which Byron is re-using from the *Prisoner of Chillon* volume, published earlier in the year, and, according to Jerome McGann (CPW IV 464) written earlier still:

By thy cold breast – and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulphs of Guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy,
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed for human – thine own heart,
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! – and compell
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial,
Nor to slumber – nor to die
Shall be in thy destiny,
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear,
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee,
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the Word been passed, – now Wither! (I i 242-61)

(... lines which, as I've said, read to me as if they are intended as the climax of an extension to Coleridge's *Christabel*.) But the influence of *The Excursion* does not, paradoxically, cease here, with the apparent realisation of nature's inexorable unfriendliness. It has to be exorcised, in part by the Incantation itself, but also, in part, by Manfred's scene with the Witch of the Alps in II ii (written after Byron and Hobhouse had visited the Staubbach falls on September 22nd-23rd). Here are his words to her about

his boyhood:

I said with men and with the thoughts of men
 I held but slight communion – but instead
 My joy was in the Wilderness – to breathe
 The difficult air of the iced Mountain's top
 Where the birds dare not build – nor insect's wing
 Flit o'er the herbless Granite; or to plunge
 Into the torrent – and to roll along
 On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
 Of river=stream or Ocean in their flow –
 In these my early Strength exulted, – or
 To follow through the Night the moving Moon
 The stars and their development, – or catch
 The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim,
 Or to look listening on the scattered leaves
 While Autumn Winds were at their Evening=Song; –
 These were my pastimes – & to be alone. – – (II ii 60-75)

If there is an immediate Wordsworthian influence here (and Byron may more recently have read the deeply Wordsworthian *Alastor* – see section above) it is from the *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*:

He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
 Upon the mountains visitant;
 He hath kenned them taking wing;
 And into caves where Faeries sing
 He hath entered; and been told
 By Voices how men lived of old.
 Among the heavens his eye can see
 The face of thing that is to be;
 And, if that men report him right,
 His tongue could whisper words of might. (128-37)

For Manfred the boy, nature had been what she had been to Young Clifford here – a friend, teacher and parent-substitute. But when in Act III (written in Italy at the end of 1816, or the start of 1817) Manfred addresses the Sun, he speaks to it not as an equal, or as a being in communion with which he can lose himself, but as one who, even though he may partake somewhat of its nature, is far above and beyond him:

Glorious Orb! – the Idol!
 Of early Nature, and the vigorous race
 Of undiseased mankind, the Giant sons,

Of the embrace of Angels with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring Spirits who can neer return. –
Most glorious Orb! that wer't a worship eer
The mystery of thy making was revealed –
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty
Which gladdened on their mountain-tops the hearts
Of the Chaldean Shepherds till they poured
Themselves in Orisons – thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown –
Who chose thee for his Shadow (III ii 3-16)

The reference to “Chaldean Shepherds” again echoes *Childe Harold*:

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams ... (CHP III, 14, 1-3)

or

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth–o'er–gazing mountains, and thus make
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands. (CHP III, 91, 1-6)

E.H. Coleridge (and, doubtless coincidentally, CPW) both refer, in their notes to *Childe Harold*, to Herodotus' description of the Persian religion at *Histories*, Book I 131, and to *The Excursion*, IV 671-6. But neither point out that the odd phrase “Chaldean Shepherds” from *Manfred*'s address to the Sun (no-one believes the Babylonian astronomers literally to have observed and calculated the stars' courses while herding flocks) is also from *The Excursion*. Here is IV, 694-706:

Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the conclave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His steadfast eye. The planetary Five
With a submissive reverence they beheld;
Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move

Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
 Decrees and resolutions of the Gods;
 And, by their aspects, signifying works
 Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.

So, even though Byron may have rejected the Wordsworthian concept of nature as comforter, and as extension of one's being, the less intimate awe in the face of nature expressed by such Wordsworth passages as this was still powerful enough – and powerfully enough supported by Byron's Alpine experiences – to continue echoing in *Manfred*, even when other Wordsworthian ideas had been rejected. Man, Manfred's (and Byron's) experience suggests, could no longer be the child of nature, but he might mature into being its Magus, or interpreter. Thomas Taylor had expressed a high opinion of the Chaldean astronomers:

I know, indeed, that the Chaldeans, and Magi of the Indians, were the first that asserted the soul of man was immortal; and this opinion was embraced by some of the Greeks, and particularly by Plato the son of Ariston.³

Although *Manfred* would be distressed at the idea that his own soul was immortal.

3: Taylor's Pausanias, I 430.

MANFRED: A STAGE HISTORY

So far as I know, there has never been a professional English-language production of *Manfred* which is faithful to Byron's text. Byron would not be surprised, but would be mildly horrified, at what the English theatre in fact did to his script.

Its first London production was at Covent Garden (not Drury Lane, Byron's theatre) in 1834, and ran for thirty-six performances. Augusta Leigh attended, as if to silence any gossip about the play's theme. Scenery was spectacular, and music was written especially by Henry Bishop. Henry Denvil – a competent but unremarkable artist, by all accounts – played the lead. The text was rearranged without scruple. Bits of the original third act were incorporated, including Ashtarothe's song. There was a chorus of thirty witches. All references to the godhead were expunged. The ending was changed, and Astarte reappeared, to assure Manfred that he (like Faust) was redeemed after all. She was Manfred's "cousin":

Manfred
Old man! 'Tis not so difficult to die.
Music is heard & a voice above exclaims
 'Manfred! Manfred!'
Manfred
Ha! That voice! It rouses! renovates!
 Astarte & Spirits appear
Astarte
Manfred! Look up – I do forgive thee!
He breaks from Abbott, rushes towards her – falls & Dies
 *Thunder lightning & Snow arises*¹

The show gave rise to a parody, *Man-Fred* (printed below), in which the protagonist is a chimney-sweep:

1: Quoted Howell pp.102-3.

Man-Fred. This pot must be replenish'd; but I think
 It ne'er would hold as much as I could drink.
 My slumbers – if I slumber – are not sleep,
 But interrupted by a cry of Sweep!²

Denvil produced the play again, for one performance, in Bristol on September 7th 1835, and for two on January 4th and 11th 1836. Houses were poor on both occasions. He was also unsuccessful as *Manfred* in America.

The next attempt was at Drury Lane, in 1863. It was a great success, and sixty-three performances were given in all. The popular Samuel Phelps played the lead, and poor Henry Denvil worked as an usher! Bishop's music was again used, plus Schumann's overture. The text was more closely respected than had been the case in 1834. This time, Astarte reappeared at the end, showing compassion but without words of forgiveness.

Both productions proved, by the ease with which they used spectacular scenery and skilful spectral effects, how false Byron's assertion was that the play could not be mounted. The Alps, the Waterfall, the Hall of Arimanes, and so on, were design challenges to which the huge theatres were more than equal, and raises the question, "Was it *because* the play was so good a commercial proposition that Byron had the horrors about its being staged?"

A production at the Prince's Theatre Manchester opened on March 6th 1867. Charles Calvert produced and played *Manfred*. 535 lines were cut (including the Coliseum speech), and others relocated: for example, the expository scene between Herman and Manuel was placed at the start, and Astarte appeared wordlessly again at the finale. Spectacle was again indulged in, and much music, but the show, which transferred to Liverpool, was not a hit.

The smaller Princess Theatre was where the next London production happened, in 1873. It ran for forty-seven performances. There was not one, but a whole chorus of Chamois Hunters. Charles Dillon was *Manfred*, and once more emphasis was on spectacle. It was changed (as usual) from a philosophical tragedy into a sentimental pantomime.

Henry Irving, who had played Faust, planned a *Manfred*, but didn't execute it. In 1918 there was an experimental Stage Society production at Drury Lane, with Edith Evans as the Witch of the Alps and Nemesis, and Thomas Beecham conducting Schumann's music. *Manfred* was Courtney Thorpe. The show ran for only two matinees, July 28th and 29th: and that

2: See Cochran (ed.) *Byron at the Theatre* (CSP 2008), pp.175-89.

constitutes the complete twentieth-century toll of *Manfreds* until an apparently undistinguished production at the Rudolph Steiner School on June 15th and 16th 1951. Here Schumann's music was again used, but in a piano version only.

Tchaikovsky was a man of the theatre, but his *Manfred* symphony isn't a stage work, although of all things inspired by Byron's play, it is the most considerable, and deserves attention.

In 1868 Berlioz was in St Petersburg, conducting, among other things, *Harold en Italie* (a piece based "very loosely indeed" on *Childe Harold* IV). The critic Stasov was much taken by it, and suggested that it would be an excellent idea if someone attempted a similar thing based on *Manfred*. Balakirev jumped at the concept, and sketched out the plan of such a work, conscientiously tying each movement to a scene in the play, and even giving appropriate key-signatures for each movement. But he didn't write the work himself – he gave his plan first to Berlioz (who said he was too old) and then to Tchaikovsky, who saw potential in the idea, and duly sat down to read *Manfred* for the first time, claiming to be much moved by it. He then went to Switzerland – threw Balakirev's plan into the waste-bin – and wrote a huge, completely unrelated symphonic work, which he called (for politeness' sake), *Manfred*. Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* is one of his greatest works – but has no relationship to Byron's play except in the most general terms. Its second movement, for example, based on the scene with the Witch of the Alps, is a Mendelssohnian scherzo, giving the Witch a light fairy quality not possessed by her static original: and the finale depicts, first of all an infernal orgy not in Byron's drama, and at the end, with the sensational entrance of an organ, a massive eschatological transfiguration at serious odds with the anticlimactic "Old Man, 'tis not so difficult to die" which is the exit-line of the original protagonist. Schumann commits the same error.

Schumann's incidental music to *Manfred* (it is practical theatre music, like Mendelssohn's for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) was composed in 1848 and played first on June 13th and 14th 1852 at the Hoftheater, Weimar, conducted by Liszt. Manfred was played by Ernst Possart, who later played the part in New York. Subsequent productions were in Munich (1868) Berlin (1883) and Oldenberg (1885). In the twentieth century, it

was more common to play Schumann's music, with extracts from the play as accompaniment, than vice versa. This tradition began, with Walter Damrosch conducting, in New York during 1874, -87, -88 and -91, when extracts from Byron's text were read, with George Riddell in the lead. The most recent attempt at the same inversion of priorities was on BBC Radio Three, January 22nd 1988, with Byron's lyrics re-translated by Jeremy Sams, and Lothar Zagrozek conducting. Ronald Pickup was Manfred, Joss Ackland the Chamois Hunter, Robert Eddison the Abbot, and Victoria Carling Astarte.

Schumann writes a gloomy, romantic overture; and follows it with several "melodramas" – soft music to underline dialogues and soliloquies. All the spirits in I i (except the final one, who speaks) have their lyrics set (which lengthens the scene quite a bit), and the accusatory stanzas 6 and 7 are given to a tenor soloist. There is a massive choral piece to open the scene in the Hall of Arimanes. Manfred's deliberately banal final line is romanticised by having his last colloquy with the Abbott underlined with organ music and a heavenly choir – which seems to indicate a deliberate misreading, similar to Tchaikovsky's.

A recording exists of Beecham conducting Schumann's music, with substantial sections of the play. The radio actor Laidman Browne plays nearly all the male roles in various voices and an old-fashioned but crystal-clear idiom. George Rylands was to have been in the recording, but missed his train, so that Browne has to "duet" with himself as both Manfred *and* Chamois Hunter, Manfred *and* the Abbott, and so on. Jill Balcon, Daniel Day-Lewis's mother, is Astarte. It's on Youtube (February 2014) at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnVwfZfB6Bk>, but minus the overture.

An Italian version of the play, with Schumann's music, and Carmelo Bene as Manfred, is also (February 2014) on Youtube, in sound only: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H0FndrkuW_0

La Scala forces are conducted by Donato Renzetti. A video version, also with Carmelo Bene, but with Bologna forces under Piero Bellugi, is also (February 2014) on Youtube, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOZ66Z8d62Q>

This is done mostly with Bene and the solo singers in close-up.

There have been other Italian performances, always with Schumann rather than Byron as their focus.

The most recent U.K. performance of *Manfred* known to me was an acted reading at the King's Head Islington, in 2007;³ I contributed a programme note, but was unable to see it.

3: See Michael Simpson, *Byron's Manfred and the King's Head: Having Words with Bodies*, BJ 37 No.1, 2009 pp.43-54.

APPENDIX 1

BYRON'S FIRST LETTER TO JOHN MURRAY ANNOUNCING *MANFRED*

Byron to John Murray, from Venice, February 15th 1817:

(Source: text from NLS Ms.43489; first sheet only at LJ IV 52-5 and BLJ V 169-70)

This letter has never been published complete. Byron answers Murray's letters of December 13th 1816 and January 22nd 1817.

Venice – February 15th. 1817

Dear Sir –

I have received your two letters – but not the parcel you mention. – As the Waterloo spoils are arrived – I will make you a present of them – if you choose to accept them – pray do. — I do not exactly understand from your letter what has been omitted – or what not – in the publication – but I shall see probably some day or other – – I could not attribute any but a good motive to M^r. G – or yourself in such omission – but as our politics are so very opposite – we should differ as to the passages – however if it is only <the> {a} note – or notes – and a line or so – it cannot signify. – You say “a poem” what poem? – you can tell me in your next. – – – Of M^r. H's quarrel with the Quarterly R. – I know very little – – except <the> {Barrow's} article itself – which was certainly harsh enough – but I quite agree that it would have been better not to answer – particularly after M^r. W. W. who never more

1:2

will trouble you – trouble you. – – – I have been uneasy – because M^r. H told me that his letter or preface¹ was to be addressed to me, – now he & I are friends of many years – I have many obligations to him – & he none to

1: Hobhouse's *Substance of some Letters ... from Paris*.

me – which have not been cancelled & more than repaid – but M^r. G. & I are friends – also, and he has moreover been literarily so – through thick & thin – in despite of difference of years – morals – habits – & even politics (which {last} would I believe if they were in heaven divide the Trinity – & <leave> {put} the Holy Ghost out of <seniority> {place}) and therefore I feel in a very awkward situation <bett> between the two M^r. G. & my friend H. – & can only wish that they had no differences – or that such as they have were accomodated. – The answer I have not seen – for it is odd enough – for people so intimate – but M^r. H. & I are very sparing of our literary confidences – for example – the other day he wished

1:3

to have an M.S. of the 3^d Canto to read over to his brother &^c. which was refused; – and I have never seen his journals – nor he mine – (I only kept the short one of the mountains for my sister) nor do I think that hardly ever he or I saw any of our own productions previous to publication. – – – The article in the E. R. on Coleridge I have not seen – but whether I am attacked in it or not – or in any other of the same journal – I shall never think ill of M^r. Jeffrey on that account – nor forget that his conduct toward me has been certainly most handsome during the last four or more years. – I forgot to mention to you – that a kind of poem in dialogue (in blank verse) or drama – from which “the Incantation” is an extract – begun last summer in Switzerland – is finished – it is in three acts – but of a very wild – metaphysical – and inexplicable kind. – Almost all the persons – but two or three – are Spirits of the earth & air – or

1:4

the waters – the scene is in the Alps – the hero a kind of magician who is tormented by a species of remorse – <when> the cause of which is left half unexplained, – – he wanders about invoking these spirits – which appear to him – & are of no use – he at last goes to the very abode of the Evil principle in propria persona – to evocate a ghost – which appears – & gives him an ambiguous & disagreeable answer – & in the 3^d. act he <dies> is found by his attendants dying in a tower – where he studied his art. – You may perceive by this outline that I have no great opinion of this piece of phantasy – but I <figure on> have at least rendered it quite impossible for the stage – for which <I have> my intercourse with D. Lane

had given me the greatest contempt.² — — — — —

I have not even copied it off – & feel too lazy at present to attempt the {whole – but} when I have I will send it you – & you may either throw it into the fire or not; – I would send you the

2:1

2) rough copy as it is – but it would be illegible – & perhaps not less so when copied fair. – The “Incantation” was the conclusion – (a kind of Chorus) of the 1st. scene .. — — — Nobody has seen it. — — I send you an extract. — from out act 2^d. —

Beautiful Spirit! – with thy hair of light
 And dazzling eyes of Glory – in whose form mortal
 The charms of Earth’s least=<earthly> daughters grow
 To an unearthly stature in an essence
 Of purer elements – while the hues of youth,
 Carnationed like a sleeping Infant’s cheek
 Rocked by the beating of her mother’s heart, or heaving
 Or the rose=tints which Summer’s twilight leaves
 Upon the lofty Glacier’s virgin snow
 The blush of Earth embracing with her Heaven,
 Tinge thy celestial aspect, & make tame
 The beauties of the Sun=bow which bends oer thee —+
 Beautiful Spirit! In thy calm clear brow
 Wherein seems glassed Serenity of Soul
 Which in itself shows Immortality –

Note The Sunbow is an Iris formed (before Noon) over the Alpine waterfalls – it is of the same form & colours as the rainbow.

2:2 I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
 Of Earth – whom the abstruser powers permit
 At times to commune with them – if that he 30
 Avail him of his Spells to call thee thus

2: *Manfred* is in fact tailor-made for Drury Lane, with a superb role for Kean.

And gaze on thee a moment. –

– –

&^c. &^c. –

So much for that – I send you another – from a different part of the same act. – – – –

Manfred] hour –
Daughter of Air! – I tell thee since that <hour>
But words are breath – look on me in my sleep –
Or watch my watchings – Come – and sit by me!
My Solitude is Solitude no more
But peopled with the Furies – I have gnashed
My teeth in darkness till returning light
Then cursed myself till Sunset. – I have prayed
For madness as a blessing – 'tis denied me –
I have affronted death, but in the war
Of Elements the waters shrunk from me –
And fatal things passed harmless – the cold hand
Of an all pitiless Demon held me back
Back by a single hair which would not break. –

3:1

In phantasy – imagination – all
The Affluence of my Soul – which one day was
A Cræsus in creation – I plunged deep –
But as an ebbing wave it dashed me back
Into the Gulph of my unfathomed thought. –
I plunged amidst mankind; Forgetfulness
I sought in all save where 'tis to be found
And that I have to learn – my Sciences –
My long pursued & superhuman art
Is mortal here – I dwell in my despair
And live – & live forever. – – – – –

Another extract

Arimanes

Hymn of the Spirits – in the Hall of <Arimanes>

Hail to our Master! – Prince of earth and air!
 Who walks the clouds & waters – in his hand
 The Sceptre of the Elements – which tear
 Themselves to Chaos at his high command –
 He breatheth – and a tempest shakes the sea –
 He speaketh – & the Clouds reply in thunder –
 He gazeth – from his glance the Sunbeams flee –
 He moveth – Earthquakes rend the world asunder –

3:2

Beneath his footsteps the Volcanoes rise, –
 His Shadow is the Pestilence; – his path
 The Comets herald through the burning skies –
 And Planets turn to ashes at his wrath:
 To him War offers daily Sacrifice,
 To him Death pays <to> his tribute: Life is his,
 With all it's infinite of agonies, –
 And his the Spirit of whatever is. –

 Another extract

|Manfreds address to the phantom which
 | has refused to reply to Nemesis and to
 | Arimanes.

Manfred

Hear me – Hear me –

Astarte! my beloved speak to me –
 I have so much endured – so much endure
 Look on me – the Grave hath not changed thee more
 Than I am changed for thee – thou loved'st me
 Too much as I loved thee; we were not made
 To torture thus each other; – though it were
 The deadliest sin to love as we have loved,
 Say that thou loths't me not – that I do bear
 This punishment for both – that thou wilt be

4:1

One of the blessed – and that I shall die –
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence, in a life
Which makes me shrink from Immortality,
A future like the past. – I cannot rest.
I know not what I ask – nor what I seek
I feel but what thou art – & what I am
And I would hear that voice which was my Music
Yet once more ere I perish. Speak to me –
For I have called on thee in the still night –
Startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs,
And woke the mountain=wolves, & made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me – many things answered me –
Spirits & men – but thou wer't silent all –
Yet speak to me – I have outwatched the Stars
And gazed in vain oer heaven in search of thee –
Speak to me – I have wandered oer the earth
And have not found thy likeness – Speak to me –
Look on the fiends around – they feel for me –
4:2

I fear them not – and feel for thee alone
Speak to me – though it be in wrath – but say –
I reck not what – but let me hear thee once –

Another extract from Act 3^d.

| To the Sun

|_____

— — Glorious Orb! the Idol

Of early Nature and the vigorous race
Of undiseased <m/>Mankind – those Giant Sons
Of the embrace of Angels with a sex
More beautiful than they – which did draw down
The erring Spirits who can neer return: –
Most glorious Orb – that wert a worship eer
The Mystery of thy making was revealed –
Thou earliest Minister of the Almighty –

x

Which gladdened on their mountain—tops the hearts
Of the Chaldean Shepherds till they poured

x See Genesis – where it is mentioned that a race of Giants was produced by the intercourse of women and angels.

4:3

Themselves in orisons – Thou material God!
And representative of the <u/>Unknown
Who chose thee for his Shadow – thou chief Star
Centre of many Stars – which mak'st our earth
Endurable – & temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk beneath thy rays –
Sire of the seasons – Monarch of the climes –
And those who dwell in them – for near or far
Our inborn Spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects – Thou dos't rise –
And shine – & set in Glory – Fare thee well –
I neer shall see thee more – as my first Glance
Of love & wonder was for thee – then take
My latest look – thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the Gifts of life & warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature. – He is gone –
I follow.

<Mountains have fallen> Mountains have fallen
Leaving a gap in the clouds – & with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren – filling up
The ripe green valleys with Destruction's splinters –
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash

4:4

Which

<That> crushed the waters into Mist – and made
Their fountains find another channel<s> – thus –
Thus in it's old age did Mount Rosenburg –
Why stood I not beneath it? _____

Thinks't thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth, but actions are our epochs – mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable
Endless & all alike – as sands on the shore
Innumerable atoms & one desert –
Barren & cold on which the wild waves break
But nothing rests save carcases, & wrecks,
Rocks, & the salt=surf weeds of bitterness. –

I send you these extracts at random – the rest is about the same pitch – no
better & no worse – but whether good bad or indifferent I do not know –
and you can judge (or get judged) for yourselfs – I have filled up my
sheets with this &.^c but will write to you again soon.

y^{rs}. very truly
[signature swirl]

APPENDIX 2

TWO PROPOSED PRODUCTIONS OF *MANFRED*¹

A noted Byronist once gave a paper about *Manfred* in an extremely Byronic location. He was planning, he told us, a production of *Manfred*, perhaps at Stratford Ontario. It would be a concept production, and he hadn't cast the lead yet. He would cut forty percent of the text, and the show should run about ninety minutes.

He'd been very impressed by a drama group which had put on *Hamlet*, *Faust*, and I know not what else, all *without words* ... he didn't use the phrase "mime-troupe", and appeared to think they'd found a brilliant new way to by-pass the problem of language in the theatre.

In his production of *Manfred*, all the cast would be on stage throughout, and all would be masked apart from Manfred and Astarte. There would be no naturalistic scenery, the set would be made of scaffolding, and there would be a lift built in to the scaffolding (a noisy lift, so that it drew attention to itself) in which the cast would move from stage area to stage area. Manfred would operate the lift, for Manfred would be in charge of all the action, a kind of Prospero figure (he didn't say that exactly, but Manfred would cue all the lights, and so on).

As if to counter the Brechtian effect of the foregoing (this was not his phrase), the show would open with the first bars of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, which he thought more suitable than any of the nineteenth-century music supposedly derived from the actual *Manfred*. Someone asked him if he knew Busoni's *Faust*, the final tableau from which, the interrupter said, fits *Manfred* well: a passer-by sees Faust's dead body and asks, "Has something happened to that man?" How to incorporate this into a production, the interrupter didn't say.

The Famous Byronist had divided the play into five sections:

The Prologue in Hell

Tod und Verklärung (the Alpine scenes)

Temptation and Rejection (the Witch of the Alps)

1: For an excellent analysis of how *Manfred* might really be produced, see Taborski, pp.19-37.

The Harrowing of Hell (the Hall of Arimanes)
The War in Heaven (Act III)

Astarte (he had a projection of her, describing it as “crucified cheesecake”),² would preside over the Incantation – which is directed at Annabella Milbanke, not at Manfred – and would be chanted by the whole cast, straight at the audience, implicating them as *hypocrites lecteurs* (or *hypocrites spectateurs*), as Artaud wanted theatre to do in *The Theatre and Its Double*.³ Astarte would double Ashtaroth – *both* third acts would be played. Manfred would not actually fall when he “falls senseless” – and when he died, he would walk off stage.

A silent film scene of flying witches illustrated his presentation, which elicited an awed reaction from the audience.

All the way through, he said, emphasis would be on the comedy. How to deliver the line “He would have been an awful spirit” was not discussed.

The Famous Byronist had done what no director should ever do: start with his Concept, and rack the Text to fit it. It was a gross example of what Peter Hall instructed Jonathan Miller to avoid: Hall “told him [Miller] at the outset, quite bluntly, to stop imposing reductive academic conceits on plays”.⁴ Except this conceit wasn’t even academic.

I was told that the jaw of another famous Byronist dropped open after two minutes and stayed there for an hour.⁵ For me it was the final revelation that there are no standards in academic life, and that if you have a name you can get away with anything.

My production of *Manfred* – Manfred as Norman Bates

If left to my own devices, I wouldn’t do a production of *Manfred* at all. As a poem by Byron it may be fascinating, but as a play it’s rubbish. What can you say to a script seventy-eight pages long, twenty-three pages of which are exposition – telling you everything you need to know about the past, before you can understand what little of the action there is left to be dramatised? And even then, it’s inadequate exposition: you aren’t told enough to understand what the hero’s problems are. You don’t know

2: I tried this phrase out on a famous female Byronist in the lunch-queue that day, and she hit me.

3: My gloss, not his.

4: Kate Basset, *In Two Minds: A Biography of Jonathan Miller* (Oberon, 2012), p.196.

5: This Byronist had been seen at an earlier conference, in tears during a playing of the Thomas Beecham recording of *Manfred* (see above).

Ha! how is this? thou'rt ill; thou'rt very pale.

What have I done to thee? Alas, alas!

I meant not to distress thee. – O my sister!

Jane (*shaking her head*): I cannot speak to thee.

De Monfort:

I have killed thee.

Turn, turn thee not away! look on me still!

Oh! droop not thus, my life, my pride, my sister;

Look on me yet again. (*De Monfort*, II ii).

De Monfort was written for John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons – Byron tried to set up a production with Siddons and Kean, but Siddons was in Edinburgh.

The second huge problem in staging the play stems from the first. Because so much of the action has already happened, there's hardly any action left to put in. We can see Manfred is miserable, and may guess easily enough that he's doomed – all the dramatist has to do is work out some imaginative way of killing him off. He had, as we know, two attempts at doing so. The first one is feeble: there's an explosion in Manfred's tower (just as the servant is about to say the word "sister"); the servants go off, carry Manfred back, and he dies. What caused the explosion we don't know, and Byron can't be bothered to tell us. Was he conducting some forbidden chemical experiment? We aren't told. The second attempt is a bit better. Byron obeys the instruction of William Gifford, his "literary father", makes the Abbot dignified, and brings the devils (or "A Spirit") in at the conclusion: but they / he / it find that for some reason they / he / it can't drag Manfred down to Hell, as he / they / it drag Dr Faustus and Don Giovanni, and Manfred drops dead without their help, his last line ("Old Man – 'tis not so difficult to die") being said now to the Abbot, instead of to one of the servants, as in the first version.

By the end, Manfred may have reached some kind of inner calm; but his reaching it is all the play's action is about: there's no tension in the way he reaches it, once his attempt at reconciliation with Astarte's spirit is rejected. Astarte hardly talks to him, and apart from the supporting Chamois Hunter and the Abbot, neither of whom makes any impact on his impenetrable nature, there are no contrasting opponents or second leads with whom he can interact. He's Macbeth without a Banquo – Rosalind without a Celia – or as George Sand writes, "Faust délivré de l'odieuse compagnie de Mephistophélès". To deprive your Faust of his Mephistopheles, and have him damn himself unassisted, may be a bold innovation demonologically; but it deprives the drama of a lot of its interest. As a consequence, the play "wants incident" – just like Sir Fretful Plagiary's play in Act One of *The Critic*.

This absence of any strong antagonists to the protagonist, and indeed of any incidents, drains the play of narrative tension. As in *The Two Foscari*, where there's no tension either, all the audience can do is watch glumly (or, in *The Two Foscari*, with some disbelief), as the hero is destroyed, without even the tiniest chance of being saved.

For these reasons, I wouldn't want to direct *Manfred*.

But supposing someone paid me a large sum of money to direct it?

If so *bribed* to direct it, I'd start with the actor playing Manfred. It's a massive role, obviously intended for Edmund Kean, with Kean's voice and personality stamped all over it. Mine would not be a Concept Production. Concept Productions kill the play stone dead, which, when you think about it, is what they're designed to do. Production Concepts are like Literary Theories. We all know the difference between a Scientific Theory and a Literary Theory: a Scientific Theory emerges tentatively – if at all – from a mass of evidence and observations, and your aim is to disprove it.⁶ A Literary Theory springs fully-armed from a Critic's Head, and you only adduce the evidence which supports it – if you find that reading the text won't support it, you ignore the text. Likewise with a Theatrical Concept: if parts of the text work against your concept – why, cut them! Cut *all* the text if it interferes with your Concept, and do the play as a mime.

So, rather than developing any concepts, I'd wait till I knew my leading man, his personality, tones, and rhythms, and then shape the entire show around him. I'd even ask my design team to wait until they saw him in rehearsal, too, before they started work (this would only be possible with a big budget and lots of time: I'd insist on six weeks' rehearsal). You need someone with a dark, brooding, magnetic personality, who's very good at conveying guilt.

You need Al Pacino.

But I'd be frightened of directing Al Pacino. I don't think we'd speak the same language – look at the problems Hugh Hudson had, directing him in *Revolution*. He'd ask lots of "logical" Stanislavsky questions, all of which missed the point: did you see his film *Looking for Richard*? So I'd go for Ralph Fiennes. He's charismatic, and does misery and guilt superbly. I think I could communicate with him.

Though Byron is, as I've said, too chicken to make it clear, my

6: Though a very famous academic once murmured to me, "Ah, but nobody really does that!"

interpretation of Manfred's subtext (if the actor insisted on speaking in such terms), would be that he'd bonked his sister, and that she'd killed herself from horror and guilt. His super-objective would be to die, and for his spirit to cease to exist – "Oblivion!"

I'd want a small-to-medium size auditorium, neither Drury Lane nor The King's Head. Big enough to imply the Alps and the Hall of Arimanes, but small enough for the audience to feel they were inside Manfred's mind.

Even with a big budget, I wouldn't have realistic scenery (most of the budget would have to go on Ralph Fiennes' salary, anyway).

The huge trap Drury Lane and Covent Garden fell into in Byron's day was their insistence on realistic scenery – it insults the audience's intelligence, and assumes they have no imagination. It completely "misunderestimates" (as President Bush would have said), the power of theatrical illusion. If you're setting a scene in the Alps, you don't need rocks in the foreground, mountains on the cyclorama, or snow falling from the flies. All you need is mountain wind on the soundtrack, and the line "... thou fresh breaking Day! And you ye Mountains! / Why are ye beautiful?" – and the audience know at once they're in the mountains; their imaginations do the rest for you. *Which* mountains, the dialogue should make clear soon enough.

If my designer insisted, and if I liked her / his designs, I might allow him / her some *discreet* projected mountains on the cyc; but I wouldn't be happy about it.

I would insist on a projected rainbow for the Witch of the Alps: if we could afford the technology, we could even have a hologram projection, so she really could appear through it.

I'd do most of the effects with lights: the gallery in the first scene would be done with a diagonal beam of light, getting broader as it went from upstage O.P. to downstage P., and Manfred would sit / stand / prowl at the downstage end, while the spirits and voices appeared at the upstage end. Around him would loom hundreds and hundreds of books – his trap, his bibliographical nemeses. I'd experiment in rehearsals with the spirits being onstage all the time, crawling about, invisible to Manfred: but this might make him look too stupid too early, in which case I'd cut the idea.

Costumes would be Regency. All the nineteenth-century illustrations

make Manfred renaissance, thereby missing the point.

The actors I'd have as the spirits in the first act would have a fine time also being destinies and devils in the second act, which I'd base on the *Hexenküche* scene from *Faust* – which Byron knew, vaguely. I'd have them all as apes and meerkats – though if my designer had any better ideas I'd listen. We'd need a good choreographer for devilish movement. He / she and I would decide on the music: my vote would be for fragments of Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* Symphony.

Astarte (a difficult but brief and unrewarding role), would be there in the flesh, not a projection: she'd be lit and made-up to resemble a corpse, and would be on a platform so high that Manfred wouldn't be able to touch her – just out of his reach (the platform would be upstage O.P., and would double as the height from which Manfred tried to kill himself, and where the Witch of the Alps stood). Manfred would stare at Astarte and struggle to reach her, but she wouldn't look at him at all. It would be an inversion of the Balcony Scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. To compensate the poor actress, I'd offer her the Witch of the Alps too (Edith Evans played two parts in 1918, after all).

My instinct would be not to have Ashtarothe, the cheap, slimey Abbot, or the flight to the Shreckhorn, but to do the second, solemn version of the third act.

However, we could do two “Ashtarothe matinees” a week. On an “Ashtarothe matinee”, we could play the whole show for comedy – Manfred would be a post-modernist thug (an overweight, bespectacled lecturer in comparative religion at a cut-rate Scottish university). The spirits in Act One would indeed be there on stage unseen by him – his postgraduate students, waiting for him to self-implode so they could steal his ideas. Astarte would be a stripper – albeit a dead one: a zombie stripper – the phrase “crucified cheesecake” springs to mind: she'd be dressed like Dietrich in *The Blue Angel*, and he'd be gross, like Emil Jannings, with a collar twenty times too big for him. This time she'd be on the same level as Manfred, and he'd try and recapture that first fine careless rapture with her corpse, while Ahriamane and the Destinies looked on and chortled. In Act I, you'd see that he keeps her corpse in the “chamber where none enter” referred to at III ii, 8 – just as Norman Bates keeps his mum upstairs: that's why she's “without a tomb”!⁷ On the line, “He would have

7: I am indebted for this idea, as I've written, to the late Professor Anne Barton.

been an *awful* spirit", Ahrimanes and all the devils would crack up with laughter, slapping both one another, and the demon who said it, on the back, and roll about, screaming with laughter, "An *awful* spirit! An *awful* spirit!"

Manfred would stare, uncomprehendingly, not seeing the joke.

An "Ashtarothe matinee" would probably draw bigger audiences than all the evening shows put together. Robbie Coltrane would be Manfred on "Ashtarothe matinees", and the Abbot would be an Abbess, and be played by Dawn French.

With them, and Ralph Fiennes as Manfred in the evenings, it should enjoy a modest run.

APPENDIX 3

MAN-FRED

There are plenty of parodies of Byron's poems – *Childe Paddy in London*, and so on – but few parodies of his plays. To work, a parody must have the confidence that its original is well-known, which, despite Macready's efforts with *Werner*, none of Byron's plays ever were. *Man-Fred* is the exception which proves the rule. Its author, Gilbert à Beckett (1811-56), was a lawyer, journalist, and comic writer and lyricist. He was on the staff of the first *Punch*. The impresario Alfred Bunn (1796-1860), produced a version of *Manfred* at Covent Garden, which ran from 29th October 1834-18th February 1835. Henry G. Denvil played the lead. There was spectacular Alpine scenery, and the Witch of the Alps emerged from beneath a practical waterfall. Bunn cut and rearranged the text heavily in the interest of numerous witch-dances (there were thirty witches). Manfred threatened to have Ashtaroath carry the Abbott to the Shreekhorn, but then repented and changed his mind. All hints of scepticism, radicalism and incest were removed: Astarte was Manfred's cousin, and finally his redeemer:

Manfred: Old Man! 'tis not so difficult to die.

Music is heard and a voice from above exclaims

Manfred! Manfred!

Manfred: Ha! That voice! It rouses! Renovates!

Astarte and Spirits appear

Astarte: Manfred! Look up – I do forgive thee!

*He breaks from the Abbott, rushes towards her – falls and dies!*¹

Man-Fred was produced at the Strand Theatre at the same time. As will be seen, it neither knows nor cares what it really intends to be – partly a parody, not of Byron's *Manfred*, but of Bunn's: partly a protest against the recent law forbidding chimney-sweeps to cry out their trade in the streets (even if they see a chimney ablaze): and partly a satire on the

1: For all the foregoing, see Margart Howell, *Byron Tonight* (Springwood 1982), pp.97-105.

King's Theatre Management for its unwillingness to draw up proper contracts for some famous international singers and dancers (see notes below). By the end, the first two themes have been left behind. Man-Fred, having starting as a summoner of chimney-sweep boys, ends as a fantasy impresario of international opera singers and ballet dancers. Ann Starkie ("his blowing"), saves not his soul but his purse, via her impersonation of Madame Grisi (we think). The sketch is amusing in that it places Byronic ideas and characters in the midst of those quotidian human emergencies of London and its theatreworld from which he had striven so hard to keep his distance. I have omitted the introduction, which dwells exclusively on chimneysweeping, and paints an idyllic picture of the life of a boy sweep which would have surprised (for example) William Blake or Charles Kingsley. In the face of increasing concern, Parliament had earlier in 1834 passed an act attempting to regulate how chimney-sweeps hired their boys. No boys under fourteen could be hired; no sweep could have more than six boys at a time; each boy had to express before a magistrate his willingness to be a sweep; no boy would be sent up a chimney to extinguish a fire. The act had, as an afterthought, also regulated the masters' street-cries.²

My text is a micro-fiche from the New York Public Library: Ser.4E.ABECK. First I photocopied the micro-fiche, then scanned-in the photocopy.

Cast of the Characters,
As performed at the Metropolitan Minor Theatres.
Strand Victoria
Dec. 26, 1834. 1835.

Man-Fred (*an active Master Sweep, with no Business, and who therefore has no business to be active*) Mr. Mitchell.

City Charley (*the Watchman*) Mr. Chippendale. Mr. Doyne.

Ann Starkie Miss P. Horton. Miss P. Horton.

SPIRITS AND DUSTY ONES.

Perrot (*Spirit of Pirouettes*) Mr. Oxberry. Mr. Oxberry.

Tamburini (*a Bass Spirit*) Mr. Dubochet. Mr. Dubochet.

Ivanoff (*a Spirit pursuing the tenor of his way*) Mr. Kerridge. Mr. Kerridge.

2: See K.H.Strange, *Climbing Boys: a study of Sweeps' Apprentices 1773-1875*, Allison & Busby 1982, p.65.

Taglioni (*Spirit of Dancing*) Mlle. Josephine. Mlle. Josephine.
 Grisi (*Spirit of Several Airs*) Miss P. Horton. Miss P. Horton.
 Fanny Elsler (*a stout Spirit*) Miss Gillman. Miss Gillman.

Spirits of the Chimnies, Messrs Kerridge, W. Horton, and Miss Booth (the Infant Prodigy, only three years of Age).
Other Spirits by other Bodies.

Costume.

MAN-FRED. – Puce-coloured coat – shabby genteel striped waistcoat – black velvet breeches – black silk stockings – shoes – small black hat – long black hair.

CITY CHARLEY. – Watchman's drab great coat – slouched hat – woollen comforter staff and lantern.

ANN STARKIE. – Coloured cotton gown – white apron and cap.

SPIRITS AND DUSTY ONES.

PERROT (*Dress of Apollo*) – White kerseymere shirt, trimmed with silver – flesh dress – blue drapery – sandals – wreath of laurel on the breast.

TAMBURINI (*Dress of Henry VIII*) – Crimson velvet and gold mantel, edged with ermine – brown and gold doublet and trunks – white hose – white shoes – garter – sword and gauntlets.

IVANOFF. – Crimson Greek dress – Grecian cap and leggings.

SPIRITS OF THE CHIMNIES – Sweeps' black dresses.

TAGLIONI. – Shot dress of white and silver tissue.

GRISI. – White muslin.

FANNY ELSLER. – Pink satin.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

The Conductors of this Work print no Plays but those which they have seen acted. The Stage Directions are given from personal observations, during the most recent performances.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R.C. *Right of Centre*; L.C. *Left of Centre*; D.P. *Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage*; C.D.F. *Centre Door in the Flat*; R.D.F. *Right Door in the Flat*; L.D.F. *Left Door in the Flat*; R.D. *Right Door*; L.D. *Left Door*; S.E. *Second Entrance*; U.E. *Upper Entrance*; C.D. *Centre Door*. The Reader is supposed to be on the stage, facing the Audience.

MAN-FRED.

ACT I.

SCENE I – *The Cellar of Man-Fred – a common check curtain concealing a bed, c.v.*

MAN-FRED discovered sitting on a high stool, with an empty porter pot.

Man-Fred. This pot must be replenish'd; but I think
It ne'er would hold as much as I could drink.
My slumbers – if I slumber – are not sleep,
But interrupted by a cry of Sweep!
And yet I hear it not, although I bear
The name of sweep: the business is not there.
I mourn and curse the fatal Act – becos
It's made the trade by no means what it was.
The chimney sweeping art I've toil'd to learn,
And of each flue am up to every turn;
But this avails not: labour I've endured,
Some of the smokiest chimneys I have cured.
But this avails not; I have been opposed,
And all who have met up against me closed.
But this avails not: industry or skill
A large connection, and a fine good-will,
Have been to me as nothing, since the law
Was pass'd which tells the sweep to hold his jaw.
I have no hope – my love of work is gone,
I see a chimney blaze, and cry, Blaze on!
But to my task: Ye little 'prentice lads –
Ye foundlings – ye that never knew your dads –
Who, black yourselves, in sooty essence dwell,
And love the dingy cellar passing well,
To whom the inaccessible high tops
Of houses are but skips, or jumps, or hops,
I call upon ye, by the indentures here,
Which give me power o'er you, – rise! – appear!

A pause.

They wake not yet: now, by a slice of bread,
On which the first that rim shall be fed,
Or by May-day, which comes but once a-year,
I do invoke ye. Rise! get up! Appear!

A pause.

If it be so, you shall not thus elude
My call; this inattention's worse than rude.
But here's a power

Advancing to a pitcher, and taking it up.

more potent than the rest;
Clean water is a thing you all detest.
If you don't wake, I'll duck you – don't you hear?
Get up, you lazy rascals! Rise – appear!

The curtain draws, and discovers three Sweeps in bed, c.v. – The first Sweep Boy rises from the bed to the music of "The Merry Swiss Boy".

First Boy. Master, yielding to thy law,
From my bed of straw,
Which is covered with the bags,
To soften it, with dirty rags,
I get up, and wish to know
For what it was you hollow'd so?

Second Boy. You know the monarch of chimnies, –
I swept him long ago,
With a six-foot brush, of the strongest rush,
And a scraper as long as a hoe.
I'm the best hand in all the trade,
Could sweep gas-pipe white:
Why from my bed, in which I'm laid,
Do you wake me up to-night?

Third Boy. I, who sweep the smallest flue,
Why am I woke up by you?
Three Sweeps together. Why have you set up this noise,
To disturb your climbing boys?

Man-Fred. I call you up to ask the reason why
You earn so little money?

First Boy. Master, fie!
We can but give you what, we earn, you know:
How can we help it, if the trade's so so?

Man-Fred. You mock me, and I've call'd you up in vain;
So you may all three go to-bed again.
Yet, hold! – I know not what the deuce I'm at;

I'll take a walk – where is my Sunday hat?

[*Music, "Cherry Ripe."*

The form of ANN STARKIE appears at the opening of the cellar above – she holds an apple in her hand.

Ann. Who'll buy my apples? Here – the best

I've got,

To boil or roast – a halfpenny a lot!

Man-Fred. [*Starting, and looking up.*] Is that a vision? –

Like to heated oil

My thick blood burns!

Ann. [*Disappearing.*] The very thing to boil!

Man-Fred. If that were real, I were happy still;

But she has vanish'd: oh! I'm taken ill!

'Twas like Ann Starkie, but it could not be;

She would not offer apples unto me:

My want of cash to that would be a stopper;

And, boiling apples, too! – I've not a copper!

What shall I do? Shall I my cellar keep,

Or madly brave the Act, and call out Sweep?

No, no! 'tis vain; I'll go, but will be hushed;

My spirits, like an opera-hat, all crushed!

ANN STARKIE re-appears, and throws an apple at Man-Fred – he falls, and the scene closes to hurried Music.

SCENE II. – The Strand.

Enter ANN STARKIE, R., with a basket of apples.

Ann. Apples, here – apples, oh! – in vain I roar;

No one will buy – it cuts me to the core.

"The trade is at a stand," the people whine:

If it be at a stand, 'tis not at mine.

In vain down Fleet Street with my wares I go;

Though Fleet they call the street, its trade is slow.

On Ludgate Hill, no customers at all;

I cannot sell a penn'orth by St. Paul;

So I've come here, because I understand,

The public's very liberal in the Strand.

Oh, dear! my head's *distracted*; love has ta'en

A place for one within my wretched brain.
 Yes, my Man-Fred fills my heart to a tittle;
 It fits him like a coat – all but too little.
 But times are so hard, one cannot wed;
 I've got no cash – no more has my Man-Fred.
 That horrible new Act has marr'd his pleasure;
 It really was a very sweeping measure.
 A thousand feelings agitate my breast,
 By which my love for Man-Fred is confest;
 Yea, like a steam-engine, my bosom jumps
 Against my chest, giving enormous thumps.
 What can it be? – Alas! it does but prove
 That with the sweep I madly am in love.
 I'm mad! I don't care twopence where I goes,
 But wander onwards, following my nose.
 No matter – on my overshadow'd fate
 Hope's light gleams faintly, like a kitchen eight;
 But of hope's candles time expands the wicks, –
 The kitchen eight becomes a parlour six!
 And then, expanding gradually more.
 The parlour six – behold! a drawing-room four!
 Oh! such philosophy my spirit cheers,
 And from my cheek dries up the gushing tears.
 As fresh silk buttons on an old surtout
 Make it, if not too moody, look like new.
 So does philosophy revive the breast
 That, with its misery, is sore opprest.

Enter Applwomen with baskets, L.

SONG. – ANN STARKIE.

Air, "We met – 'twas in a crowd."

We met – 'twas in the Strand; I thought him good-looking:
 He came – I gave him some nice beef-steak I'd been cooking.
 He ate a precious lot, and his manners quite won me;
 He sang – his fine deep voice I fancied would stun me.
 I wore my new white gown, and I rivalled its whiteness,
 I was so greatly struck with my Man-Fred's politeness.
 'Tis hard, though, my poor heart he can't let me keep, Oh!
 Oh! you have been the cause of its loss, my dear sweep, Oh!

A DANCE. – ANN STARKIE and Apple-women.
[*Exeunt, L.*

SCENE III. – *Fleet Street – a rope hung across from R. to L., from which are suspended two lighted lanterns – the gas-pipes are being repaired. –*

The scene opens to slow music – air, “Robin Adair.”

MAN-FRED discovered standing on the gas pipes, which are lying on a heap of stones, L. C.

Man-Fred. My climbing-boys to look for work are gone,
And here am I alone – alone – alone!
I’ve wander’d out – for what? I do not know.
How came I perch’d up here? I look below,
And see the gas-pipes branching from the main;
And then I see them joining it again.
The gas that lights the city up, they hold
Mankind’s sagacity in that is told;
But all the gas that all the Wallsend coal
Could maim, will never light my darken’d soul!
You, too, ye stones! upon whose piled-up heap
I stand, and see beneath an awful leap;
I look below – sounds! what a long way down!
I wouldn’t jump it not for half-a-crown!
Something, I’m certain, moved; ah! what was that?
Am I mistaken? – No; it was a rat!

City Charley.³ [*Crying without, R.*] Past twelve!

Man-Fred. Ah, hark! – I hear the well-remember’d note,
The music of the passing watchman’s throat;
For this is in the city, where still rise
The passing watchman’s time-proclaiming cries.

Enter City Charley, with a staff and lantern, R.

Charley. [*a.c.*] I thought I heard a talking here. Odd sooks!
An’t that a man up there? – How queer he looks!
He’s not respectable, that’s my belief;
Yet he don’t look exactly like a thief.

3: A City Charley or Charlie was a night-watchman (named after Charles II, who introduced more of them).

His dangerous position makes me stare;
 I wonder how the deuce he got up there.
 He looks so so, because his coat is seedy;
 A decent person, probably, but needy.
 I, as a watchman, ought to see him clearer;
 Therefore, I'll go at once a little nearer.

Man-Fred. [*Not seeing him.*] Ye omnibuses! that come rattling down
 Full galloping through every street in town;
 Ye cabs! that kill your five or six per day!
 Ye hackney-coaches! why thus keep away?
 Why come ye not and crush me? – No, you kill
 Those victims only who'd be living still!

Charley. It's every minute getting now more dark:
 I wonder if the gemman wants a lark?
 I'll warn him to come down; for if his track
 He does but lose, he'll come a precious whack!

Man-Fred. It's getting dark (at least it will be soon);
 Somebody has been snuffing out the moon!
 I'm getting rather giddy, and I feel
 As if my brains were dancing a Scotch reel.

Charley. The gentleman is clearly in a funk:
 I hope, for goodness' sake, he isn't drunk!
 I must be cautious, nor approach too near,
 Lest I should startle him. [*Calling.*] Ho! do you hear?
 Young chap, upon my word, I rather think
 You're getting much too close to that there brink.

Man-Fred. [*Not hearing him.*] I'll take a jump; no longer will I stop:
 What is a bruise to me? or what a whop?
 They'll take me to the hospital, I know,
 And there they'll feed me well; so here I go.

Charley. [*Seizing him just as he is about to spring.*]
 Hold, madman! What the devil are you at?
 What, plunge among the gas-pipes? – none of that!
 You must not here come dashing out your brains;
 Blood makes a shocking mess; you know it stains.
 If you're for suicide, there's the water's ridge;
 On Waterloo your life you can abridge.

Man-Fred. Nay, do not hold me back: sir, you, intrude;
 This interruption's rather worse than rude.
 I, surely, in a country that is free,
 Can kill myself, if it so pleases me.

Charley. Not in this parish – we don't like the bother;
But you can do it, sir, in any other.
Now come along with me; put one foot so, –
Be cautious, or, good gracious! down you'll go.
Now here, now there. Mercy! what are ye at?
This mud's like walking upon mutton fat.
Gently; now hold my coat, sir, by the skirt;
Don't tug, or we shall both be in the dirt.
Come on – good gracious! Now the other leg:
I thought I soon should take you down a peg.
We're safe; and now, sir, come along with me,
For you I'll make a nice hot cup of tea.

[*Exeunt, R.*

SCENE IV. – *A Room in a Public-House.*

MAN-FRED and CITY CHARLEY, with a pint of beer, right.

Charley. Nay, don't go yet; it is not very late;
Besides, you're not exactly in a state.

Man-Fred. Not in a state! What do you mean by that?
I know, sir, to a shaving, what I'm at.

Charley. Thy old black socks and velvet breeches, too,
Proclaim you are not very well to do.
One of the many sweeps, whose cellars lie
About St. Giles's neighbourhood, hard by,
Pray which of these may you its master call?
No gammon, sir, with me – I know them all.

Man-Fred. No matter.

Charley. [*c.*] Well, at me you need not snap:
Will you have half-a-pint of beer, young chap?

Man-Fred. Thank you, I'd positively rather not.
What do I see? There's blood upon the pot!

Charley. What are you up to? I begin to think
You're mad, young gentleman; – why won't you drink?

Man-Fred. I say, again, there's blood upon the pot!

Charley. And, I reply, decidedly there's not.
I'm sure you're mad, young man, but let us parley:
Do you know what I am?

Man-Fred. A city charley!

Now question me no more; I'm off – good night!
 Charley. [*Aside.*] I'm sure that gentleman is not quite right.

SONG. – MAN-FRED.
Air, "Alice Grey."

It's all along with Parliament;
 It's too bad, sir! – it's a shame
 I mayn't call out, if I should see
 A chimbley all in flame.

SCENE V. – The Saloon in the Opera House.

Enter ANN STARKIE, disguised as Madame Grisi,⁴ L.

Ann. Well, here I am; I must have had some nouse
 To get so well into the Opera House.
 My poor Man-Fred, they tell me, comes and walks
 About the place, and of lost business talks;
 He used the Opera chimnies all to sweep,
 But now there's no one here a fire to keep;
 But I've a plan that will surprise him: oh!
 In this disguise his Ann he'll never know.
 As he believes in spirits, 'twill be easy
 To make him think that I'm the shade of Grisi.
 Then my companions, who are all met here,
 As other spirits to him will appear;
 But as I've got a singer's part to fill,
 I'd better try my voice – and so I will.

SONG. – ANN STARKIE.
Air, "Una voce poco fa".⁵

Here my voice I think I'll try,
 In this place it will resound;
 I can go immensely high,
 Then down again quite to the ground.
 Yes, I'll try it with a song

4: Giulia Grisi (1811-69) Italian soprano. Sang Adalgisa, Semiramide, and so on.

5: Rosina's aria from Act I of *The Barber of Seville*.

Just about three minutes long;
There just now is no one near, –
If I fail, there's none to hear.
Therefore, I need have no fear,
If I find my voice is queer.
I'm fit for the Opera,
I'm quite certain;
No one could be properer
Before the curtain.

[*Exit, R.*

SCENE VI. – *The Inside of the Opera House.*

Music, "Adieu, thou dreary Pile!"

Enter MAN-FRED, L.

Man-Fred. This is the Opera; but, ah! I see
It is not now the thing it used to be.
When are the Pasta's⁶ heart-subduing sounds?
Where now are Taglioni's⁷ graceful bounds?
Where is the audience? – And where can be –
But, oh! the question's unless – the lessee?
I'll try my voice, in practice just to keep:
"Sweep, ho!"

Four single echoes are heard, R. and L., then all together. "Sweep!"

Man-Fred. Why, what a charming echo! 'Pon my word,
It is the sweetest that I ever heard.
Echo has taken ev'ry box and stall,
The only thing that answers to my call;
Echo is in the pit, and fills the gallery;
But echo cannot pay an actor's salary.
Where are the singers? Oh, they do not hear!
Where are the dancers? why don't they appear?
Spirit of little Perrot!⁸ hither come;

6: Giuditta Pasta (1797-1865) soprano. Created Anna Bolena and Norma.

7: Marie Taglioni (1804-84) Italian ballerina. Created *La Sylphide* (1832).

This is, you're well aware, your proper home.

Enter the SPIRIT OF PERROT, R.

Spirit of Perrot. Ah! who is this? – Who can the intruder be?
Is it that fated wretch, a new lessee?

[Hurried music.

Enter the SPIRITS of THE CHIMNEYS, R. and L. – they dance with their backs to the audience, as if on the stage of the Opera House, forming a circle – Man-Fred in the centre, with his face to the audience.

Enter the SPIRITS OF TAMBURINI,⁹ IVANOFF,¹⁰ and TAGLIONI, two Sweeps, and LADIES, R.

Man-Fred. I come not here to talk with you; but, stay:
Who the deuce are you all? – This instant say!

[Music. They dance round, forming a half-circle facing the audience – Man-Fred gets to the left.

Spirit of Perrot. We are the shades of those engaged: we ought
To open now the doors – ouvrez la porte!

Omnes. Ouvrez la porte!

Man (L.) I know not that; nor have I ought to do
With what you hint at. *[To Tamburini.]* Now, sir, who are you?

The Spirit of Tamburini advances, L. C.

RECITATIVE. – The Spirit of Tamburini, (as Henry the Eighth.)¹¹

Where's the great losses? In vain I search the place:

For a bass singer, this is conduct base!

Where, in the earth, shall I find the lessee? – Oh!

I wonder when the devil he can be – oh!

8: Jules-Joseph Perrot (1810-92) French ballet-dancer and choreographer. Created *Ondine* and *Giselle*.

9: Antonio Tamburini (1800-76) Italian baritone. Was in the premieres of *I Puritani* and *Don Pasquale*.

10: Nicolai Ivanov (1810-80) Russian tenor. He had been in *Anna Bolena* earlier in 1834.

11: In *Anna Bolena*.

[Retires up, *L. C.*

The SPIRIT OF IVANOFF advances, R. C.

AIR. – THE SPIRIT OF IVANOFF, “Vivi tu,” in *Anna Bolena*.¹²

Will you me engage
For your stage?
I entreat you – prithee, do.
I am quite, sir, in a rage;
Then engage,
Then quickly, prithee, do!
You can ne’er conceive what I can do:
With the music high ascending,
Scales and quavers never ending;
Your cash you can’t be better spending.
Then engage me – prithee, do!

[Retires up, *R. C.*

Man-Fred. Oh, now I see – here’s Taglioni, too,
And Fanny Elsler.¹³ – Bless me! how d’ye do?
Ah! I perceive; but still I do not see
The greatest spirit – Grisi: where is she?

Enter ANN STARKIE as the Spirit of Madame Grisi, C. F. – she advances, c., and sings the Prayer in Anna Boleyn.

RECITATIVE.

Spirit of Grisi. [*To Man-Fred.*] If thou art the lessee, the doors unclose,
oh!

Out of engagements all us it throws, oh!
I was engaged at an enormous sum:
Oh, say – say, why don’t he come?
However, I will claim my whole year’s salary,
And I appeal to boxes, pit, and gallery.
Spirit of Perrot. Sir, it’s too bad; I’ve come, engaged from France,

12: Donizetti’s opera had played at the King’s Theatre earlier in 1834.

13: Fanny Elssler (sic: 1810-84); Austrian ballet dancer.

And now I find there's no where I can dance.
 Spirit of Grisi. What shall we do?
 Spirit of Perrot. I feel inclin'd, I vow,
 To kick up here a devil of a row.
 I want my salary: don't I leap much higher
 Than a roast chestnut bounding from the fire?
 And Tamburini –
 Man-Fred. Him full well I know:
 He's paid so high, because he sings so low.
 Spirit of Perrot. Here we are all at sixes and at sevens.
 [*To Man-Fred.*] Are you the manager?
 Man-Fred. Forbid it, Heaven!
 If I engage you, say, what can you do?
 Spirit of Perrot. Stand on one leg much longer than on two.
 I'll do my best to please, whate'er it is.
 Man-Fred. You need not fear, then, in a house like this;
 Will each one do the same?
 Omnes. We are agreed.
 Man-Fred. Then I'll engage you, for you must succeed!
 [*To the audience.*
 Since, to appear before you, they have come,
 Will you consent that this shall be their home?¹⁴

*Grand burlesque pas de trois by Perrot, Taglioni, and Fanny Elsler –
 shouts – after which, a tremendous crash – with a grand burlesque tableau
 as the curtain falls.*

THE END.

14: Audience reaction anticipated.

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